EVOLUTION
of
INDIAN CULTURE

(FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES
TO THE PRESENT DAY)

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Preface (Third Edition)

It gives me great pleasure to place before the readers the third edition of the present book. Its sale and popularity have induced me to revise it, and adding more subject-matter I bring it to the present day. It would not be out of place to mention here that the present book is translated and published in the Russian language by the Publishing House of Foreign Literature in Moscow. Reviewing the merits of the book Shri B. I. Potapovsky remarks that **"The book gives Soviet readers an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the History of Indian Culture."**

Any valuable suggestion to enhance the usefulness of the book will be highly appreciated.

Sept. 15, 1960. B. N. LUNIA.

Preface (First Edition)

INDIAN HISTORY has never been made interesting except by rhetoric. The task appeared somewhat formidable one 'to be tackled only by such as had the patience of a scholar and the zeal of a missionary'. As a result of this India's past has been a closed book to all but the very few.

However, the devoted work of a generation of scholars has thrown a flood of new light upon the subject. But the results of their investigations have been chiefly intended for the specialists and many are still singularly blind to India's spiritual and aesthetic values and her contribution to world culture. To-day, when India is once more emerging from eclipse, it is more than ever incumbent on us to explain to the world the glories of her past achievements in the domain of religion, art, literature and politics. It is criminal to belittle or ignore a culture which gave the world a religious teacher like the Buddha, rulers like Asoka and Akbar, Krishnadevaraya and Shivaji, saint and politician like Mahatma Gandhi, poet like Kalidas, the Ajanta frescoes, the South Indian bronzes, the superb plastic masterpieces of Sanchi and Borobuder, the temples, mosques and palaces found all over India.

An attempt is, therefore, made in the following pages to trace the evolution of Indian culture. It is difficult to define "Culture", but I have taken it, in the broadest sense, to include all those movements which have been contributing to build up civilisation, social and religious ideas, manners and morals, literature and economics, art and industry—all have been moulding our culture. I have avoided a mass of detail and unfamiliar names and confined myself to cultural aspects especially significant or distinctive. This omission is not accidental but deliberate ; the main theme of the book is the history of the Indian culture which reveals outstanding unity of spirit and remarkable continuity of effort to achieve a rich and complex civilisation of unrivalled values. A power of assimilation and synthesis has throughout the ages characterised the Indian

culture. It had worked not only in the religious thought and social institutions of ancient India but also manifested in the persistent efforts at the conciliation of conflicting tendencies during the medieval period and it continues even today when new and strange ingredients are being introduced from the West. Now, let the Indian culture, which has been urging humanity to move forward in its march, carry the present warring world to greater summits of achievements.

It is difficult to express my feeling of gratitude to those writers, renowned as well as unrenowned, from whose works I have liberally borrowed my material for the present book.

Jan. 1st, 1951
INDORE, (M. P.)

B. N. LUNIA.

Chapter 1

The Physical Features of India and the Underlying Unity

"HISTORY is the product of two great forces, environment and personality ; the course of action that the famous figures of history can take, must of necessity take into account the surroundings in which they are placed." In other words, the physical features of a country—its normal conditions, its climate, hills, coast-lines, rivers, borders etc.,—have always influenced the course of its political, social and economic history. They go a long way in moulding the life and character of the people. It was well said by Richard Hakluyt that geography and chronology are the sun and the moon, the right eye and the left eye of the history. The history of India, like that of other countries, cannot be understood without a careful study of its physical features.

Various Names of the Country

The sub-continent of India stretches from the Himalayas to the sea. It is known as *Bharatvarsha*, or the land of Bharat. He was a king famous in the Pauranic traditions. Bharatvarsha was said to form a part of a larger unit called *Jambu-dvipa* that was considered to be the innermost of the seven concentric island-continents into which the earth, as conceived by the Hindus, was supposed to have been divided. But early Buddhist evidence points out that *Jambu-dvipa* was a territorial name actually in use from the third century B. C. It was applied to

that part of Asia, outside China, throughout which the powers of the great imperial family of the Mauryas made itself felt.[1]

The present name India and Hindusthan can be traced back to the early invaders of the country, the Persians and the Greeks. Their progress towards this country usually stopped short at the Indus or the *Sindhu.* Hence they called the country "the land of the Sindhu". Since the Persians pronounce the letter 's' as 'h', they pronounced the word Sindhu as Hindu. The word India corresponds to the Sindhu (the Indus) or the Hindu of the old Persian epigraphs. Closely connected with "Hindu" are the latter designations "Hind" or "Hindustan" as used by the medieval Muslims. Most of these names still survive.

India is a vast sub-continent in Asia. It is a peninsula, having the shape of an irregular quadrilateral. As regards population it is the second biggest country in the world, the first being China. It is inhabited by 361.25 millions of people. India's population is about one-seventh of the world.

Splendid Isolation of India

Walled off by the impenetrable Himalayan range in the north and flanked on the sides by lesser ranges, India is practically isolated from Tibet, China and the rest of Asia. Both in the west and the east these mountain ranges are pierced by many passes more or less open—thus forming the only gates of India. On the east, west and south its shores are washed by the Bay of Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean respectively. With the waters of the ocean separating her from Africa on the one side and Malaya and the islands of the Indonesian Archipelago on the other and cut off by mountains on her land frontiers in the North, East and West, India was, from the beginning of her history, isolated to a large extent in her evolution and was individual in her life and development. This splendid isolation enabled her to develop peculiarities and special characteristics which constitute the differentiating marks of a distinct type of civilisation. Her civilisation is distinct in important respect from the civilisation of the rest of the world. To a very large

1 *An Advanced History of India* by Majumdar, Roy Chaudhary and Datta, p. 3.

extent the habits, the dress, the religion, the laws and the learning of the Indians have been what they have themselves evolved and found to be suitable for themselves. No doubt a few traces of foreign influence on Indian learning and art of the Greeks and the Arabs in ancient and medieval times and of the Europeans in modern times can be perceived. But they are comparatively small when considered along with the vast panorama of India's historical development and her civilisation.

Though India was isolated largely, yet her vast dimensions, variety of racial elements, wide differences of climate, great diversities of soil and different physical characteristics not only prevented her from being a stagnant pool but gave it a continental character. It enabled her to generate the forces of action and reaction which lead to the development of civilisation. Thus the continental character of India is an essential factor in her history.[1]

Main Geographical Divisions of India

India is divided primarily into the following four distinct regions geographically.

1. *The hilly country of the North.* It stretches from the swampy jungles of the Tarai to the crest of the Himalayas. It embraces not only the upland territories of Kashmir, Kangra, Tehri, Kumaun, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, but the greatest and highest mountain, the Himalayas, which forms a sort of wall about 1500 miles in length in the north of the country. This northern wall though pierced by many openings has not been used by immigrants or invaders due to the high elevation of the Himalayan range and its snow covered passes. Similarly the north eastern ranges comprising the Patakai and the Naga hills running down to the Bay of Bengal have offered tremendous difficulties to the invaders. This protective wall of the Himalayas has given to India the continuity of its civilisation and social structure from the earliest to the present times. The society described in the great Indian epics is not essentially different from what holds its sway to-day in India. Religious doctrines and beliefs, the rules of marriages, the ritual of burial and the organisation of social relationship are not basically

[1] *A Survey of Indian History* by K. M. Panikkar, p. 1.

different even today. The continuity of Indian life is the supreme gift of the Himalayan range.[1]

Unfortunately, there are a few openings in the north-western side of this Himalayan Wall. They, owing to their low elevation and the absence of forests, have offered an easy access to the invaders of the country from times immemorial. The Aryans, Persians, Scythians, Turks, Tartars, Mongols, etc., all poured in through these openings, called the Khyber, Gomal, Bolan, Kuram and Tochi passes. They form regular gateways to India. For the security of the country, it becomes imperative that these gateways must always be kept well-guarded. Indian history is not wanting in instances to show that whenever the government of India neglected the defence on this side, it invariably came to grief. However, it should also be noted that these mountain passes or gateways were not mere gates of expedition, invasion and conquest but they fostered also a more pacific intercourse with the outside world. The mountain roads from Tibet to Nepal have carried for ages peaceful missioneries of culture and religion. These mountain passes and roads brought to India "the pious pilgrim and the peaceful trader and constituted highways for the diffusion of Indian culture and civilisation throughout the greater part of the Asiatic continent". "The natural frontiers of India thus gave security, but not immunity from invasion and while they ensured definite individuality to her people by separating them from the rest of Asia by well marked boundary lines, they never isolated them from the rest of the world."

2. *The Great Northern Plain.* It embraces the valleys of the Indus and its tributaries, the sandy deserts of Sind and Rajputana as well as the fertile regions watered by the Ganges, the Jamuna and Brahmaputra. It has always been the core of the Indian continent. This plain was formed by the deposit of rich soil washed down during countless centuries from the vast Himalayan ranges on the north and from the hills and uplands of the Deccan on the south. Again, the river systems of Northern India, namely the Indus and its tributaries (the Sutlaj, the Ravi, the Chenab, and the Jhelum), the Ganges and its afflu-

A Survey of Indian History by K. M. Panikkar, p. 2.

ents (the Jamuna, the Chambal, the Gaumti, the Gogra, and the Sona), and the Brahmaputra and its feeders irrigate this wide plain. These rivers played an important part in the evolution of Indian culture. It was in the valley of the Indus that the earliest civilisation of Indian history (Mohenjodaro and Harappa) flourished. The rivers of the Punjab and the Ganges determined also the nature and course of the Aryan colonisation in India. The vast natural resources of this well watered plain explain the fertility and the density of population in this region. The richness and fertility of land here also account for the multiplicity of big towns, centres of trade, and the capitals of ancient and modern empires in one or another part of this plain. All these have made this plain the lure of one invader after another. Again it is this plain, known in ancient times as *Aryavarta*, that has been the main seat of Indian civilisation and culture and the scene of the events most interesting to the outer world. It was also the centre of great religious movements like Jainism and Buddhism and the core of Indian life whose gradual expansion to cover the whole continent is the central fact of Indian History. In fact, it has truly made India. But the climatic conditions of this region have been exercising an adverse effect upon the fortunes of the people living therein. While the abundance of leisure and the absence of keen struggle for existence made it always possible for the intellectual people to devote themselves to the progress of thought and culture, a luxurious and easy-going life, on the other hand, enervated the masses and their wealth and riches tempted numerous invaders.

This extensive northern plain is broken in three divisions by wedges projecting northward from Rajasthan towards the west and the Santhal Parganas farther east. The Santhal Parganas separate the region of Bengal from the main Gangetic plain. Then in the south of Delhi lies the waterless tract. This creates a narrow corridor, known in ancient times as *Kurukshetra*, running between the desert of Rajasthan and the Himalayas. It has been the cockpit of India ; for owing to its strategic importance the fate of the country has been decided here on innumerable occasions. The history of the Aryan and the Muslim invasions illustrates this truth. The invaders from Central Asia passing through the Punjab to the Gangetic Valley had no alternative

but to go through the narrow bottle-necked plain of *Kurukshetra*, less than 200 miles in width, to gain entrance into the heart of Northern India. This fact explains why all the decisive battles for the defence of the kingdoms in the Gangetic plain have been fought at one or another place in this narrow region. The battle-fields to Tarain, Karnal and Panipat are all within this corridor.

3. *The Deccan Plateau.* It stretches south of the Gangetic plain and is separated from it by the *Vindhyas* and the *Satpuras*. It is shut in from the rest of the Deccan peninsula by the western *Vindhyas*, the *Sahyadri* range or the Western Ghats and the *Mahendra* or the Eastern Ghats. It is a triangular table-land rising abruptly in the west sloping away towards the east. Geologically the Deccan peninsula is older than the Himalayas and much more so than the Indo-Gangetic plain. It is the most ancient part of India and was once probably linked up with an Austral continent stretching far to the east. With the exception of the *Narbada* and the *Tapti* which flow westward and fall into the Arabian Sea, all the important rivers of the Deccan—Mahanadi, the Godavari, the Krishna and its tributary the Tungabhadra—flow eastwards into the Bay of Bengal. Unlike the rivers of the north—the Indus, the Ganges, and their tributaries—these rivers of the Deccan are not of much service as a means of communication. Beyond the Deccan plateau lies the Tamil land—the Mysore region and the open country stretching below it upto the sea. This is known as the Far South. The descent from the highlands of Mysore to this plain below has been a determining factor in making its own history. As the descents on the west, being more abrupt, is attended with unsurmountable difficulties, the regions of Cochin and Travancore have been less influenced by the political and military ambitions of the Mysore rulers. On the contrary the approach to the eastern and southern plains being gradual and easy from its uplands, Mysore had dominated the history of the Carnatic region. The Far South had a historical individuality. The people of this land had developed their own civilisation. The cultural accomplishments and political genius of the Dravidians found a true home in the Far South. There they could develop naturally and successfully without being hampered by the aggressive and triumphant North. No Hindu or Muslim Empire-builder of

the North could ever subdue the whole of the Far South and retain it under his control for a long time.

On the northern side of the Deccan plateau, the *Vindhyas* and the *Satpura* with their outlying ranges, the valley of the Narbada and the Tapti rivers and the dense impenetrable forests south of the Chhota Nagpur not only separate the Deccan from the north but create great barriers difficult to cross. In the Vedic and Epic days, these mountains and their dense impenetrable jungles were known as *Dandakaranya* and *Mahakantar* which the Aryan tribes found it difficult to penetrate. This led to the conception of two different countries—*Aryavarta* and the *Dakshinapath*. Consequently the Aryan culture and civilisation remained confined to the North. Though later on occasional attempts were made by Asoka, Samudragupta, Allauddin Khalji, Muhammad Tughlaq and Aurangzeb to combine the North and the Deccan under one political unit, the two had only seldom been united in one political and cultural land. For centuries together the Deccan remained immune from after-effects of the Muslim invasions and the occupation of the North. Physical features, thus, have tended to isolate Southern India from the rest of the country and consequently it early developed a culture and thought essentially its own and has played only a secondary part in the history of the country. However, there has been one great advantage of the Deccan. "In difficult and troublous times the culture of the North could always seek refuge in the Deccan. When Buddhism became dominant in the North, Brahmanical religion and culture made their way to the South, and thus were enabled to survive and later to regain power and ascendance in the North. Similarly the Jains sought refuge in the South. The "refugee" Northern literature and culture were welcomed by the great Andhra, Chola, Chalukya, Yadava and Hoysala rulers of the South."[1] Today, since modern scientific inventions have been able to overcome the natural barriers and difficulties of communications, Northern and Southern India find themselves drawn more closely together.

4. *The Eastern and the Western Ghats.* The long and narrow maritime plains of the South extend from the eastern

The March of Indian History by Sethi, Saran and Bhandari, p. 8.

sea-coast to the Western sea-coast containing the rich ports of the Konkan and Malabar as well as the fertile deltas of the Godawari, the Krishna and the Kaveri. The Deccan table-land is flanked on the west by a continuous high mountain-wall, running parallel with the shores of the Arabian sea for about 700 miles called the Western Ghats and on the east by the low Eastern Ghats. The Western Ghats, 3000 to 8000 feet above sea-level, are steep and have a number of flat-topped peaks, converted into impregnable fortresses which played an important role in the history of the Maratha nation. The narrow strip of land, sometimes not more than 20 miles in width, stretching between the coast and foot of the Ghats is known as the Konkan and Malabar. It has a rich soil and is evergreen with rice plants and coconut trees. It is highly productive and thickly populated. In absence of modern means of communications and transport it was hard and impossible at many places to climb or cross the Western Ghats. The people living in this coastal strip, particularly in the southern parts, were, therefore, isolated from the rest of the Deccan for ages together. Even now some of them practise customs found nowhere else in India. On the other hand, in the far north on the Western Coast, the Narbada and Tapti have broken through the Western scrap and cut wide valleys across them. They, thus, formed easy paths leading to the north. It is in this region that great kingdoms and civilised people have lived from early ages. Again, from the earliest days the ports on the Western Coast from *Bhrigu-Kachha* (Broach) to Cranganore formed the main outlet of Indian commerce with the west and were in close contact with the civilisation of the Middle East.

On the eastern side, the coastal land which lies below the Eastern Ghats is much broader. The eastern scrap itself is of low elevation, much less steep and it is broken in many places by the valley of the Deccan rivers flowing eastwards. This made the communication on the east coast with the uplands of the Deccan easy. Consequently there, too, have been great kingdoms, famous flourishing cities and civilised people in the whole of this region. The ports of the eastern coasts traded and maintained from time immemorial contacts with the nations of the East—Java, Sumatra, Burma, Siam and Indo-China.

Influence of Geography upon Indian History[1]

The course of the Indian History, like that of other countries in the world, is profoundly influenced by its geography. While the physical features were being described above, their influence was noted here and there. However some general broad issues are mentioned below.

1. *Different local zones, political and cultural units.* India is well-known for her vast dimensions and the varied physical features. India contains winding chains of hills and the highest mountain ranges, lofty plateaus and vast plains, deep rivers and fertile river valleys, dense forests and sandy deserts. There is also every variety of climate. "All these factors tended to separate India into different local zones, each with a regional spirit of its own." The natural barriers largely determined the different political and cultural units into which India was divided. The North India, the Deccan-Plateau, the peninsular plains, the Ghats' regions—all have their marked political and social characteristics. The Aryan language and civilisation could not sweep over the Deccan so successfully as it did in the Northern India. Over a great part of the Deccan plateau and the Far South, the non-Aryan languages together with older customs and ideas still prevail.

2. *The Thar desert rendered Indian defence weak.* The Thar desert has affected the course of Indian history. This intervenes between the plain of the Indus valley and that of the Ganges. It separates these regions into two different units. This renders Indian defence weak. When the foreign invaders poured into India through the north-western mountain passes, 'the bulk of the Indian plains being separated from this region by the great desert, the resources of North India, far less the whole of India, could seldom be employed to guard these gateways.'[2]

There is a narrow plain on the north of the Thar desert. The foreign invaders, being prevented from getting into the

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[1] *The Vedic Age*, pp. 98-106. See for details *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. I, and *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, Chapter I.

[2] *The Vedic Age*, p. 100.

south by the desert, had to march along this bottle-neck from the valley of the Indus to that of the Ganges. Many decisive battles were fought in this bottle-neck. Geography has thus made this area a natural battle-field. Those foreign invaders who won battles here occupied Delhi easily. They had the great advantage of forcing the main gateway of India and establishing their strong base within India, before they had to reckon with the main strength of Indian defence.

3. *Primitive Indian Culture is maintained by the forests, deserts and mountain valleys.* The vast sandy desert, the dense impenetrable forests and high ranges of mountains have provided regions, difficult of access. They have offered shelter to the wild primitive tribes who were deprived of their belongings and driven away from the plains by the more civilised conquerors of India. This explains the existence of the Bhils, Kols, Santhals, Gonds, etc., in the desert, fastness of hills and forests of India. These aborigine tribes have maintained, almost in fact, their primitive characteristics.

4. *The Warrior Races of India.* The hilly districts and impenetrable forces imparted a hardihood to their inhabitants and provided means of defence which are absent in the plains. Consequently the martial races of India have been chiefly bred in the dry, hilly districts of the north-west, Maharashtra and the deserts of Rajasthan, where a livelihood can only be wrested from the soil by intense efforts, and even then has to be supplimented by raids upon more favoured neighbouring regions. These martial races have imbibed from their environment love of freedom which sharply distinguishes them from their neighbours. They had carried on struggle for independence against heavy odds. The successful heroic struggle of the Marathas and the Rajputs against the imperial authorities of Delhi was to a large extent due to the geographical features.

5. *The isolationist tendency and the spirit of local autonomy.* The Indo-Gangetic plain and the Deccan plateau have been divided into many local regions by the large rivers, their tributaries and ranges of the hills. Malwa, Bundelkhand, Oudh, Chhota Nagpur, Orissa, Northern Gujrat, Karnatak, etc., are such natural regions. Racial and linguistic factors have further stimulated the creation of such regions. These developed into

separate distinct units retaining their individuality through ages. There developed gradually regional politics which 'tended to keep alive the spirit of local autonomy in well-marked political units' and the isolationist spirit was maintained there 'even amidst political catastrophes and kaleidoscopic changes of rulers and dynasties'.

6. *The growth of fine arts and spirituality.* The geographical features of India influenced the lives and habits of its inhabitants. The extreme heat and excessive cold have made the people of the country stay-at-home and ease-living. The numerous rivers and their tributaries offered easy means of communication. The productivity of the soil has made the struggle for existence less keen and provided cheap livelihood. It enabled the people to have abundance of leisure for intellectual persuits and offered opportunities to consider the problems of life and death. This consequently developed a speculative frame of mind which attached more importance to mind rather than matter. Thus sprang up that mood of spirituality which still holds the Indian mind in its grip and saturates the whole life. "This at least partly explains why art, literature and philosophy flourished, but positive sciences made comparatively little progress in India."[1]

7. *Climatic changes affected Indian history.* Like the mountains, rivers, and the sea-coast, the climate of India has also played a large part in Indian history. It has been often argued that the tropical climate has enervated the Indians and is responsible for their failure to resist the attacks of the foreign hardy mountaineers from colder regions. The destinies of a large part of India depends to a considerable extent upon the seasonal rainfall brought by the monsoons from the Arabian Sea. If the heavy rainfall in the Uttar Pradesh, Bengal and Bihar accounts for the growth of rich and flourishing towns and happy peaceful life of abundance, the scanty rainfall in Rajasthan and the Deccan explains the frequency of the famines and raids of the roaming irregulars and the plundering armies. It must also be borne in mind that a series of climatic changes, taking place in the north-western India (now Pakistan region),

The Vedic Age, p. 103.

have materially affected the course of her history. The present arid wastes of Baluchistan once witnessed the abundant cultivation and linked India with other civilisations of the west. Khotan, now a rainless desert, was once the seat of a flourishing civilisation as late as the 9th century and India was associated with it culturally. Sind, now arid, except where it is irrigated, was one time densely populated with an equable climate and fertile soil. This is amply proved by the Indus valley seals, exhibiting rhinoceri, elephants and tigers, all inhabitants of well watered forests, now unknown in Sind.

The Arab historians speak of Sind as an oasis surrounded by deserts and Timur, as late as the 14th century, lost his horses at Multan due to heavy rains there. Strabo speaks of the violent monsoon rains of the spring and early summer of 326 B.C. in the Taxila district which hindered Alexander's operation. But now the face of this region has been considerably changed.[1]

8. *Maritime activities, but absence of mighty naval power in India.* India has a very long coast extending more than 3000 miles. But the Indians never earned the reputation of being a maritime nation. However, it would be a mistake to think that the mystery of the sea never allured the Indian mind. The Dravidians of the pre-historic times navigated the seas in pursuit of trade and commerce. From the first century A. D. to the fourteenth century commercial enterprise and the spirit of adventure led thousands of Indians from the harbours of the eastern coast across the eastern seas to Burma, Java, Sumatra, Malaya and the neighbouring islands. The ancient Deccan kings patronised great sea-faring activities. All this was responsible for the diffusion of Indian civilisation and culture throughout the eastern Asia in olden days.

The maritime activities of India were devoted to peaceful cultural and commercial pursuits. Political aggression and annihilation or economic exploitation was never dreamt of by Indians. So the need for maintaining a powerful navy was never felt by them. Moreover, the Indian rulers had enough scope for their military enterprise and imperial ambition within

India by H. G. Rawlinson, p. 8.

India itself. The dubious chances of success afforded by the sea could hardly induce them to devote their energy, time and resources to building a powerful navy in order to establish and retain an overseas empire.

General Features of Indian History

1. *Separate histories of the regions.* The political history of India resolves itself into separate histories of the regions. The natural barriers of winding chains of hills and mountains, deep rivers, sandy deserts and impenetrable forests divided India into different territorial units. These divisions "favoured the growth of a local and regional spirit and fostered separatist tendencies." Consequently there sprang up in different regions small political and social units whose divergences were accentuated by the infinite variety of local conditions. Each region had a distinct story of its own culture and civilisation. The history of India, therefore, is not one connected whole, but is the history of different parts following their own line of individual development. When we read or talk of the history of India, we generally take up the history of the central government and not that of the provinces or regions. This is the outcome of the diverse geographical conditions.

2. *Dominance of the history of Northern India.* Though geologically the peninsula of the Deccan is older than the Indo-Gangetic plain, the history of the South does not go back to an earlier age. Northern India, on account of its physical features, plays a dominating part in Indian history. The excavations at Mohenjodaro and Harappa makes us look to the North for commencement of Indian History.

3. *Absence of rigid centralisation.* "The vastness of the Indian plains does not favour the 'city state' form of government as in ancient Greece."[1] The Indian sub-continent has always been predominently "a land of country states with the village as the primary unit." Though powerful and ambitious Indian kings frequently established an empire embracing nearly the whole of India, the vastness of the country and absence of rapid means of transport and communications rendered rigid centralisation impossible. Whenever the king at the centre

[1] *History of India* by Dr. Iswari Prasad, p. 4.

happened to be weak and vaccilating his feudatories and governors of the provinces utilised the opportunities for declaring their independence. This has been the normal course of the political history of India.

4. *Monarchy, the normal form of Government.* Though some autonomous political clans and republics existed in the earlier ages, monarchy has been the normal form of government in India. As the representative system was not very common, a popular legislative body or parliament of the whole of India was out of the question.

5. *Very few popular revolts.* Since the natural divisions of the country fostered local and regional spirit, local assemblies were very significant part of the body politic. The activities of the people were mostly predominated by local allegiance and local interest. Being accustomed to political subjection, people cared little about the central government. Politically they were indifferent. A change in the ruling dynasty or person did not much affect the activities of the people. It was simply 'a change of masters' for them. Consequently "popular revolts, as distinct from the revolts of self-seekers, have been remarkably very few" in India.[1]

6. *Absence of chronological history.* The history of India is marked with absence of chronological history and its gradual evolution. It does not develop from one centre. The history of India is a long account of many different personalities, political and cultural units. Therefore, we do not perceive an incessent and definite flow commencing from one tribe or unit and steadily continuing to others.

Underlying Fundamental Unity in Diversity

India a land of varieties. India is well-known as a land of varieties. It is described as "the epitome of the world". From geographical point of view there are endless varieties. The size of the country is enormous. It is as large as the whole of Europe excluding Russia and is nearly twenty times as big as Great Britain. But more remarkable than the geographical vastness and wide area of the country is the extreme diversity of its physical features.

History of India by Dr. Iswari Prasad, p. 4.

India has winding chains of inaccessible lofty mountains, covered with eternal snow and flat plains, 'arid deserts almost untouched by the feet of man, as well as fertile river valleys maintaining a population of over three thousand persons to the mile.' Every kind of climate is met within India, from the scorching heat of the desert of Rajasthan to the extreme arctic cold of the snowy heights of the Himalayan ranges ; from the dry rocky table-land of the Deccan to the moist tropical luxuriance of Bengal and Malabar. India offers all the three types of climate—the Polar, the Temperate and the Tropical. As regards rainfall India enjoys equally wide range. It has the world's highest records of rainfall. It varies from 480 inches at Cherapunji to less than 3 inches per year in Sind and Rajasthan. This amazing variety of latitudes and altitudes, temperature and moisture, produces a corresponding variety in flora and fauna. India possesses most of the types of flora and fauna known to natural sciences.[1]

There is a great variety of racial types which India presents through her teeming millions. Smith rightly calls India an ethnological museum. The total number of the inhabitants in India amounts to about one-seventh of the whole world. As early as the 5th Century B. C. Herodotus observed that "of all the nations that we know, it is India which has the largest population". This huge assemblage of human beings is made up of diverse peoples—the jungle tribes (like Kols, Bhils, Santhals), the Greeks, the Sakas, the Kushans, the Huns, the Mangolians, the Arabs, the Turks, the Afghans etc. To-day India has the primitive tribemen as well as the polished inhabitants of cities. Every phase of the social evolution is represented by the people of India.

There are in India no less than 14 separate peoples with their own languages. Each of these peoples has its own literature. More than 200 different dialects and languages are spoken in this vast sub-continent.

There is also to be found an equal variety of religions. All the world religions are found here—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity. All have their sects

Imperial Gazette, new edition, Vol. I, p 157 and 213.

and sub-divisions. The Hindu religion itself is split up in countless creeds, the Vedic religion, the Pauranic Hinduism, the Sanatan Dharm, the Brahma Samaj, the Arya Samaj, etc. The primitive tribes have their own peculiar cults.

Then, people differ considerably in the social habits, and cultural differences vary from state to state. Financially, too, we find men with barely an income of a few pice a day and others who rank among the richest of the world.

Conflicting and varying shades of blood, strains of culture, and modes of life all together build up rich and complex diversity in India. There is no wonder if "India is a museum of cults and customs, creeds and cultures, faiths and tongues, racial types and social systems."[1]

The vastness of the country, the extreme diversity of physical features, endless variety of races, and magnitude of its population, divided into countless castes, professing numerous creeds, speaking a variety of languages and dialects—all these have made it difficult to establish an all-India empire. This also accounts for the fact that political unity is not the normal characteristic of ancient and medieval Indian history. There was no political cohesion. In all the past ages India was divided into many principalities. They were from time to time brought under subjection and integrated into an extensive empire by powerful rulers like Chandra Gupta Maurya, Ashoka, Samudragupta, Alauddin Khalji, Akbar and Aurangzeb. They exercised their sway over a large part of India. But, when internal weakness and disorder or foreign invasions or both shattered their empires, India relapsed once again into political disunity.

Again, not only the extreme south of the Indian Peninsula ever remained independent of their paramount power, but India has been mostly governed by her local provincial dynasties. In fact, India had never enjoyed supreme political unity till the nineteenth century. Politically a popular national feeling was almost absent. Calamity of a neighbouring province did not rouse much sympathy and support in the people of another province. They had no urge to unite even in the face of com-

[1] *The Fundamental Unity of India* by Radhakumud Mookarji, p. 11.

mon enemy or danger ; this absence of political unity, no doubt, not only fostered the growth of varieties of Indian culture and civilisation, but retarded also seriously the political progress of the country and hindered India from becoming a nation.

The Ideal of Unity is very ancient in India

Inspite of the above-mentioned bewildering diversity in the geographical features, the race, religion and language of the people, there is a deep underlying fundamental unity which is apt to be missed by the superficial observer. "He fails to discover the one in the many, the Individual in the Aggregate, the Simple in the Composite."[1]

Sir Herbert Risley has truly observed, "Beneath the manifold diversity of physical and social type, language, custom and religion which strikes the observer in India there can still be discerned a certain underlying uniformity of life from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin."[2] This unity has undoubtedly been nurtured in recent times by a uniform system of administration and the spread of modern education. It is a mistake to suppose that it is wholly the result of recent events and the British rule and it did not exist at all in early ages. The ideal of unity in India is not a recent growth or discovery. The founders of the Indian Civilisation were fully conscious of the geographical unity of the country and they tried to impress it on the popular consciousness.

1. *Geographical Unity*. The first expression given to this sense of unity was their description of the entire land by the single name of *Bharatavarsa* or the land of Bharat. This very name is given to the whole country in the Epics and the Puranas.

"Uttaram yat samudrasya
Himadreschaiva dakshinam
Varsham tad Bharatam nama
Bharati yatra santatih." (*Vishnu Purana*, 11, 3.1)[3]

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1 *The Fundamental Unity of India*, p. 11.
2 *People of India*, p. 299.
3 "उत्तरं यत्समुद्रस्य
हिमाद्रेश्चैव दक्षिणम्
वर्षं तद् भारतं नामा
भारती यत्र सन्ततिः" (विष्णुपुराण)

"The country that lies north of the ocean and the south of the snowy mountains is called Bharat ; for there dwell the descendants of Bharat."

The name Bharatavarsa has a deep historical significance, symbolising a fundamental unity. The term was not associated only with the geographical boundaries, but with the idea of universal monarchy also. This name together with the sense of unity that it imparted "was ever present before the minds of the theologians, political philosophers and poets who spoke of the thousand *Yojans* (leagues) of land that stretches from the Himalayas to the sea as the proper domain of a single universal emperor." (*Advanced History of India*, p. 7) They eulogised kings and emperors who endeavoured to extend their territories from the Himalayas in the north to the Cape Comorin in the south and from the Brahmaputra in the east to the Indus in the west. The rulers of the medieval period also considered India as one geographical unit and sought to extend their sway over this whole land. Today this geographical unity is reinforced by the conception of common motherland *BHARATMATA*. The song *Bandemataram* characteristically embodies this sentiment of unity.

2. *Political Unity*. The sense of the unity of the whole country was promoted by politics also. The rulers of India established their sway over the whole country and consequently contemplated over it as a unit.[1] The ideal of great rulers of India in various ages has been to become "*Chakravarti*" or to rule over the entire country. Chandragupta, Asoka and Samudragupta had established their suzerainty over the whole of India. The institution of paramount sovereignty was a familiar political idea of the Hindus in ancient ages. The frequent use of the terms *Adhiraja*, *Rajadhiraj*, *Samraj*, *Eka-raja*, *Virat*, *Sarvabhouma*, etc., in the ancient sanskrit literature and the repeated performances of such rites and sacrifices as the *Rajasuya*, *Vajapeya*, *Punaravisekha*, *Aindra mahabhisekha* show that the idea of universal conquest and an all-India overlordship was well-known to the ancient Hindus.

[1] *The Fundamental Unity of India* by Radhakumud Mookarji, p. 17.

In the medieval ages Alauddin and Aurangzeb sought to establish their overlordship over the whole of the country. The Mughals created an imperial system which deepened the conception of 'oneness of rule and sameness of political experience'. Sir J. N. Sarkar rightly points out that the Mughals unified India with such political bonds as a centralised administrative system, uniform laws and customs, common coinage, one official language Persian, extensive roads, etc. The British also achieved this political unity in India. After the political emancipation of India, the incorporation of the princely states in the Republic of India has completed this political unity of the country.

3. *Religious Unity*. There is an under current of religious unity among the various religious sects in the country. The worship of Vishnu and Shiva, though under different names, is as widespread in the North as in the South. The temples in honour of Vishnu and Shiva have been constructed all over the country. They raise their spires not only on the snow-covered Himalayas and in Indo-Gangetic plains but in the deltas of the Tungabhadra, Kaveri and Krishna also. The ancient epics, the Ramayan and the Mahabharat have been studied in the far South as well as in the Punjab, Kashmir and the Doab. The stories of Ram and Krishna are sung with as much devotion and respect in the Tamil and Kanarese countries as in the Indo-Gangetic valley. The cow, the Vedas, the Gita, the Puranas and other scriptures are respected equally throughout the country. The ancient religion of the Vedas and Puranas has been giving solace, even today, to the countless people. Monotheism, immortality of the soul, re-incarnation, Karma, deliverance or Moksha, Nirvana, etc., are the doctrines believed in and followed by all the sects prevailing in the country. They have faith in the Unseen Reality and a sense of the sacredness of all life, charity and tolerance. Religious rites and rituals have almost the same uniformity throughout the land. A permanent and characteristically Indian expression of this religious unity is the network of shrines and sacred places with which the country has been covered. The most sacred places of Hindu pilgrimage such as Badrinarayan in the north, Dwarka in the west, Rameshwaram in the south and Jagannath Puri in the east embrace the whole of the country and they

speak of India being one land. A visit to these holy places and sacred shrines is enjoined by Hindu religion upon every pious Hindu. The conception of pilgrimage was perfected as on expression of love for the mother-land and as a means of acquiring an intimate knowledge of the land in ancient times. The list of the sacred places of the Hindus in Sanskrit books show complete religious unity and familiarity with every part of India.[1] The daily prayer of a Hindu includes the names of all the main rivers of the north and the south like the Indus (Sindhu), the Ganges (Ganga), the Jamuna, Godavari, Narbada and Kaveri.[2] These remind him not only the vastness of his country, but also the cultural and religious concepts and the fundamental unity of its people.

4. *Cultural Unity.* A peculiar type of culture and civilisation, utterly different from any other type in the world, has been evolved among the diverse peoples of India. This culture has a fundamental unity. Inspite of different languages, customs and political disunity, a uniform cultural stamp was printed upon the literature and thought of all the different units of India. There has been a basic unity of literary ideas, philosophy, conventions and outlook upon life throughout the country. The fundamental basis of the social and cultural life of the whole country is one and the same. The cultural unity and the homogeneity is also reflected in the social ceremonies and religious rites, festivals and modes of life which are the same in both, the North and the South. The sanctity of the family, the rules of the castes, the *sanskars* (for example the *Namakaran sanskar*), the rite of cremating a dead body, the cleanliness of the kitchen, etc., are common to all the communities and sects. They are much the same all over the country. The Rakshabandhan,

अयोध्या मथुरा माया काशी काञ्ची अवन्तिका ।
पुरी द्वारावती चैव सप्तैता मोक्षदायिका ॥

The seven sacred places named are : Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya or Hardwar, Kasi or Banaras, Kanchi or Canjeeveram, Avantika or Ujjain and Dwaravati or Dwarka in Gujerat.

गंगे च यमुने चैव गोदावरि सरस्वति ।
नर्मदे सिन्धु कावेरी जलेऽस्मिन् सन्निधिं कुरु ॥

Dashera, Dewali, Holi and other festivals are celebrated throughout the length and breadth of the country in a uniform way.

5. *Unity of Language.* India enjoyed unity of language. Before the Christian era there was *Prakrit.* It was the common language of the people. The message of the missionaries of Asokà was successfully carried in this language to the doors of the humblest of his subjects. Later on Pali and Sanskrit took its place. Sanskrit has been acknowledged as the one sacred language by all sections of the people irrespective of their race, rank and creed. Different sects and creeds have adopted Sanskrit as the sacred language of their scriptures. Again, Sanskrit has been the original source of the different languages of the country like Hindi, Marathi, Gujerati, Bangla, etc. Even Tamil and Telugu, the languages of the Deccan, could not escape the far-reaching influence of Sanskrit. What Sanskrit had done in the past the English language had tried to achieve during the British rule and now Hindi has been doing the same.

6. *Physical Uniformity.* Various tribes—Aryans, Sakas, Scythians, Hunas, etc., have entered India. But they were so completely absorbed in the Hindu fold that they had lost their separate individuality. Even a large number of Muslims and Christians who have been living in India are the descendants of the Hindus who were converted to Islam and Christianity. All these different races and tribes have acquired, with the lapse of ages, physical uniformity. Sir Jadunath Sarkar points out that "there has been achieved same approximation also in physical type and mode of life among the various foreign races that have lived long enough in India, fed on the same crops, drunk of the same streams, basked under the same sun and submitted to the same rule in their daily lives. Even the immigrant Indian Muslims have in the course of centuries received the imprint of this country and now differ in many essential points from their brethren living in other parts of Asia, like Arabia and Persia." An Indian character and a general Indian personality has gradually evolved.

The Hindus all through the past ages have been maintaining fundamental unity in diversity. The non-Hindus have not been altogether unaffected by this sentiment of their Hindu

surroundings. Saints, prophets and followers of different rival creeds have been associating freely throughout the country. Instances of their close friendship are abundant. Many followers of Islam in India have shown a profound interest in the science, philosophy and religion of their Hindu brethren. Even to this day in the villages of India the votaries of different creeds and sects follow Hindu festivals, practices, customs and modes of life. Today reformed and modernised Hinduism together with Christianity and Islam, having ideals of social democracy, have been doing much "to counteract the fissiparous tendencies of caste and creed and check the centrifugal forces in Indian politics" and maintain the sentiment of unity in all spheres.

Thus, inspite of the appalling diversity India is herself the great example of the doctrine of one in many. There is unity in diversity—a unity far more profound than that produced either by geographical isolation or by political suzerainty—"a unity that transcends the innumerable diversities of blood, colour, language, dress, manners and sects."

Agencies for fostering the Fundamental Unity and Uniform Culture

The following agencies have been fostering in the country uniform culture and unity :—

1. *Sages and Saints, Missionaries and Pilgrims.* From the early Hindu times many *rishis* or sages had set up their hermitages at different places in the country They were the centres of the highest learning and promoted culture among the common folk. Later on the holy cities and the prosperous towns took their place. Banaras, Taxila, Mathura, Kanchi, Nalanda Avantika, Madura, Puri, Shringeri etc , were such places. They were looked upon with veneration by the people who craved to visit them. The pilgrims who visited them or the students who lived there and returned after some years contributed substantially to the diffusion of Indian culture and fundamental uni y. Sanskrit scholars, saints and missionaries also fostered the sentiment of unity by travelling all over the country. If Shankaracharya had carried his message from the Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, Chaitanya spiritualised the environment from Bengal to Vrindavan and Mira from Vrindavan to Dwarka in Gujerat. Thus the devoted pilgrims, the zealous missionaries, wandering

saints or Sanyasis and keen Brahman students formed a connecting link between the different and distant units of the country and reinforced the sentiment of unity.

2. *Imperial conquerors and soldiers of fortune.* Ambitious Emperors like Chandragupta, Samudragupta, Alauddin, Akbar, Aurangzeb etc., conquered extensive territories and united distant provinces under their sceptre. Similarly soldiers of fortune or military adventurers, especially of the Rajput race (for example Shivaji's ancestors), penetrated deep into backward and obscure provinces and there carved out their own destiny. In due course they served the purpose of a powerful engine for the spread of Indian culture and unity.

3. *Uniform administration.* Uniform administration as set up all over the country during the rule of the Guptas, the Mughals and the British has been an agency for uniting the provinces of India.

4. *Language and religion.* In the ancient times Sanskrit and Prakrit and in modern times English and Hindi have been doing a good deal to encourage cultural oneness. Similarly Hinduism which has been the fountain head of several sects and creeds has been fostering the growth of uniformity of spiritual life and thought.

5. *Modern means of transport and communication.* Railways, telephone, telegraph, wireless, radio, aeroplanes, bus, roads etc., have reduced time and distance considerably and consequently aided in strengthening the sentiment of unity.

6. *Common history and nationalism.* Common historical traditions and the subsequent rise of country-wide nationalism have successfully united the people of India.

Thus Indian culture and fundamental unity have been grounded together. A basic unity of religion, philosophy, customs, conventions, literary ideas, and cultural life has been fostered throughout India from the earliest times and it continues even to-day.

Chapter 2

The Pre-Historic Period

"MAN has been called a "tool-using animal" and no doubt all progress of culture is due to the increased use of tools and implements in the conquest of nature to make life more happy and comfortable. The material history of man is an account of the progress from a 'tool-less' state to the present state of complicated machinery."[1] History, therefore, is a record of the achievements of man.

The history of India should, therefore, begin with an account of the times when men first settled in this country. But history deals with facts as shown from records of some kind or the other. We cannot know and write the history of any people who have left no record of their life or the evidence of whose existence has not yet been traced out. For the present they must not be considered at all. Only those inhabitants of India whose existence is known from some evidence or record, they have left behind, should be dealt within the following pages.

To begin with, these records consist of the rude tools which the people used in their daily lives. Considering the nature and material of these implements, the historians have divided the earliest settlers in India into two classes, namely Palaeolithic and Neolithic.

The Palaeolithic Age or the Old Stone Age

In the Palaeolithic age rude stone implements were used as hammers, or as weapons for hunting wild animals or for

1 *History of India* by Dr. Iswari Prasad, p. 7.

purposes of cutting and boring. Such implements were usually made of stone pieces of hard rock called 'quartzite'. They have been found in some places of Madhya Bharat and more especially in the South. They are the only records left behind by the earliest known inhabitants of India. They were ignorant of any metals. "Most of them had no fixed homes, though a few might have made huts with trees and leaves. They lived in constant dread of wild animals like tigers, lions, elephants and the rhinoceros. They had no idea of agriculture, but lived on the flesh of animals and such fruits and vegetables as grew wild in jungles."[1] Probably they did not even know how to make a fire. They were savages. Their life did not much differ from that of an animal.

Neolithic Age or New Stone Age

The capacity for progress is an inherent characteristic of man. This distinguishes him from an animal. Consequently after the lapse of thousands of years, man reached the Neolithic Age. In this age also men had to depend solely on stone implements, and were ignorant of any metals except gold. But their implements differed much from those of the preceding age. Because, firstly they used stones other than quartzite and secondly these were not merely clipped, but in most cases ground, grooved and polished as well. They were highly finished articles, decently executed. They were shaped into different forms for various purposes. Such implements and utensils have been found in large numbers in Bengal, Chhota Nagpur, Gujerat, the Deccan, the South and other stray places.

The civilisation of this age shows distinct traces of progress. The Neolithic men practised agriculture and grew fruits and corn. Animals such as the cow, the dog, the ox and the goat were domesticated. The art of producing fire by the friction of bamboos or pieces of wood was known to them. They used well-chipped and polished tools. Besides this, bows and arrows were invented. They learnt the art of pottery. They made pots at first by hand and then with the potter's wheel. They painted and decorated their pots. They lived in caves the walls of which were painted with the scenes of hunting and dancing.

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1 *An Advanced History of India*, p. 11.

They had learnt the art of spinning and weaving cloth. They used to bury their dead and construct tombs over them. Sometimes they put the dead body in a large urn. Their tombs were known as *Dolmens*. They consisted of three or more stone props in a circle, supporting a massive roof of stone.

The Age of Metals

Gradually man came to learn the use of metals. At first the splendour of gold attracted him, but it was given up in favour of harder metals, such as copper. But there was no uniformity in the use of metals in different parts of India. In northern India copper replaced stone as the ordinary material for tools and weapons. Copper articles are found practically all over northern India, more particularly in the United Provinces. They include a variety of things such as axes, swords, harpoons, spear-heads, chiselling weapons, ornaments, etc. It was centuries later that people came to know iron and gradually used it as a substitute for copper. It introduced the next stage in the evolution of human history. Thus the Stone Age was succeeded by the Copper Age and the Early Iron Age in northern India. It is possible that iron was first introduced in India by the Aryans. In southern India, however, the Iron Age immediately succeeded the Stone Age. There are no evidences of the intermediary Copper Age. During the Copper and Iron Ages agricultural life replaced the hunting and pastural life.

With the Copper and Iron Ages the limits of the historical period commence. It is now generally held that the Iron Age had already commenced when the Rig Veda was composed. But a splendid example of the civilisation of the Copper Age is now before us. This civilisation flourished in the Indus Valley. It spread far and wide over the neighbouring regions. It is renowned as the Indus Valley Civilisation. But before taking it up a few words must be said about the races in India.

Races

It cannot be said with certainty when or from what sources India was first populated. Geologists argue that it must be thousands and thousands of years before that man first appeared in India. They inform us that the "Deccan at that time was linked by a stretch of land with South Africa on one side and perhaps also with Australia on the other. This land-link lasted

for thousands of years and was broken afterwards and the intervening lands subsided beneath the ocean. Even now traces of the bones and remains of plants of the same kinds are found both on the table-lands of the South and in the South-East of Africa, and below the surface of the ocean there is, even to-day, a ridge linking India with Africa."

Whether the people who inhabited India for the first time came from Australia or from Africa or lived in India is very much uncertain. One thing, however, is definite and that is the first traces of a human being in India are found in the Deccan and recently in the Narbada Valley near Maheshwar in Madhya Bharat. The rude flint implements and weapons which belong to the men of the Stone Age are discovered in southern India as well as in the southern region of Madhya Bharat. When northern India came in existence physically, men inhabited it, too, and with the lapse of centuries various peoples—Dravidians, Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Sakyas, Yuehchis, Huns, Muslims and Europeans—poured into India one after the other. Consequently, the Indian people are not descended from one race, but are made up of the descendants of diverse races which have now become so intermixed that it is not possible to say where one variety of man ends and another begins. However, if the people of India are examined according to their physical type and language, the following broad classes of races can easily be distinguished.

Sir Herbert Risley in his book *The People of India*, p. 33, enumerates the following distinct types of races :—

1. The *Turko-Iranian* type is represented by the Baloch, Brahui and Afghans of Baluchistan and the North-West Frontier Province now in Pakistan.

2. The *Indo-Aryan* type occupies the Punjab, Rajputana and Kashmir. 'Their stature is mostly tall, complexion fair ; eyes dark ; hair on face plentiful ; head long ; nose narrow and prominent but not specially long.' The Indo-Aryan race has so profoundly mixed with other races in India that it is difficult to trace it out.

3. The *Scytho-Dravidian* type is in Sind, Gujerat and Bombay State. The Marathas and the Coorgs are the chief representatives of this type. Their head is broad, nose moderately fine but shorter, hair on face scanty and stature medium.

4. The *Aryo-Dravidian* type is in the plains of the Ganges, in some parts of the Punjab, Rajasthan and Bihar. It is a mixed type caused by the Indo-Aryan colonisation of a region previously held by the Dravidian population. Their headform is long with a tendency to medium, the complexion varies from lightest brown to black, the nose ranges from medium to broad, the stature is below the average that is 5 feet to 5½ feet.

5. The *Mongolo-Dravidian* type is found in Bengal and Orissa. This is a mixture of Dravidian and Mongoloid elements. Here the head is broad, complexion dark, hair plentiful, stature medium, nose medium with a tendency to broad.

6. The *Mongoloid* type is met in Assam, Nepal, Bhutan and the fringe of the Uttar Pradesh, the Punjab and Kashmir. Their head is broad, complexion dark with a yellowish tinge, hair on face scanty, stature short, nose fine to broad, face characteristically flat and eyelids often oblique. This racial type is produced by the invasions of the peoples of the Southern Mongolian race from Tibet and China.

7. The *Dravidian* type is found from Ceylon to the valley of the Ganges pervading the whole of Madras, Hyderabad, Central Provinces and Chhota Nagpur. Risley thinks that this was probably the original type of population of India, now modified by the admixture of Aryan, Scythian and Mongoloid elements. Professor E. J. Rapson also discusses elaborately these types of races in *Cambridge History of India*, Vol I, Chapter II. But Dr. R. C. Majumdar in his book *An Advanced History of India* classifies races in India into four groups—Primitive tribes, Mongolians, Dravidians and Aryans. They are as follows—

1. *The Primitive or Jungle Tribes.* The Kols, Bhils, Gonds and Santhals belong to this class. They are short-statured, snub-nosed, thick-haired and dark-skinned people. Now the Kols and the Santhals inhabit the Chhota Nagpur region and Orissa; and Bhils inhabit the Rajasthan, the Vindhya hills and Madhya Bharat and Gonds in some parts of Madhya Pradesh. They speak distinctive language, traces of which are found scattered all over India from the Punjab to Madras. As their language is connected with those of Polynesia, Melanesia and Madagascar, it seems that the whole of this region was once inhabited by one vast race which branched off later on. They

are still uncivilised. Some scholars are of opinion that these tribes are the original inhabitants of India. But it cannot be claimed with certainty whether these are aborigines of India or whether they also came from abroad in the ages long gone by. However, it is surmised that at one time they occupied a much wider area and that they were gradually pressed back into the valleys and forests by stronger and more powerful immigrants who spread over almost the whole country. These were the Dravidians.

2. *The Mongolians.* There are people in India with strong features, beardless, yellow in colour, short in stature, snub-nosed with flat faces and prominent cheek bones. They belong to the same race to which the Tibetans, the Chinese, the Japanese, the Siamese and the Burmese belong. Tibet and Mangolia are regarded as their original home. They descended into India from the north-eastern passes and were replaced and absorbed by the Aryans. To-day they live on the slopes of the Himalayas in Sikkim, Almora, Garhwal, Bhutan and the Assam Hills. The Gurkhas, Bhutiyas and Khasis are striking examples of the Mongolian race in India.

3. *The Dravidians.* They were the most important of the pre-Aryan races of India. Their place of origin is a matter of much controversy. Some hold that they, like the Kols and the Bhils, are the direct descendants of the men of the Stone and Metal Ages and were among the original inhabitants of India. This view is questioned by some scholars who feel that the Dravidians were much more intelligent and progressive than the Kols and the Bhils. One set of scholars believe that they came from the South through the sub-merged Indo-African tract and their origin is, therefore, traced to the Negro race of Africa. But this view does not appeal to us as the differences between the two races are well-marked. Another group of scholars link them with the people of the Indus Valley Civilisation whose traces have been discovered at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. But the better opinion is that like most of the immigrants and invaders they entered either by the Mekran coast or the north-western passes. The evidence in support of this view is that there is close resemblance between their language and the language spoken by the Brahuis who live in the Kirthar mountains of

Southern Baluchistan. But the resemblance ends there. The Brahuis have neither the race marks of the Dravidians nor any of their customs. However, one thing is certain and that is the Dravidians were distinguished from the preceding races by much higher degree of civilisation that they had attained some five thousand years ago. Though at present the Dravidian population of India is mostly confined to the South, it was at one time spread all over northern India where it has left en-effaceable traces of its language and institutions. The northern vernaculars of India, though mainly Aryan, have below them a solid Dravidian substratum. The inhabitants of Bengal and those of the Uttar Pradesh still bear some traces of the Dravidian race-marks in their physical features.

As regards their culture, the Dravidians, docile and simple, were far from being barbarians. They were peace-loving people who practised agriculture as their main profession. Dams were built across the rivers for irrigation purposes. They were well familiar with the art of making weapons, conversant with the art of pottery and quite skilled in making gold ornaments. They were much advanced from the primitive stage and had established great cities and kingdoms in India and had carried on a large trade with ancient Egypt, Palestine, Persia, Mesopotamia, Babylonia and Asia Minor. The chief articles of export were ivory, gold, precious stones, rice, teak-wood, monkey and peacocks. They had highly developed languages, quite different from Sanskrit, the Aryan language. Tamil, Telugu, Kanarese, Malayalam and Tulu belong to this group. Of all these, Tamil, the language of the most civilised Dravidians, is rich and copious and possesses a fine literature which is completely independent of Sanskrit. The admirable Tamil works—the 'Kural', the 'Epic of the Anklet', and the 'Jewel-belt'—rank with the best works of any other literature. The Dravidians had a well-defined system of administration.

Their social system was matriarchal and the mothers with their children formed the nuc'eus of the society, and man inherited the property and belonged to the social group of his mother's brother and not of his father. Males and females in a village enjoyed separate quarters and lived as brothers and sisters. Sexual relations were on communal basis and the child-

ren were off-spring of intercourse, which took place on tribal seasonal festivals when young men and women of various tribes met and danced together. Their society was divided into groups, each following its own totemism. Totemism is an institution in which a group of people think that they are in some way or other intimately connected with an object of nature, generally a particular animal but sometimes other things as well. Their religion was based on fear-complex and they seem to have worshipped the mother goddess and other deities including trees and animals.

In after times, as the herds of the new immigrants—Aryans—poured in india, the Dravidians offered stubborn resistance to them, but they were gradually pushed back by them into the Deccan and far South where they continued to live and foster their own culture. In the course of time, though they accepted the Aryan view of life, on the whole their culture developed on the lines quite distinct and different from those of the Aryans—nay, even influenced the Aryan culture.

When the Dravidian culture is compared with that of the Aryans, one observes the following points of difference :

(*a*) The Dravidians did not initiate and practise a social theory like Aryan theory of *Varnashrama*—Brahmans, Kshatriya, Vaishyas and Shudras. The caste system, the very framework of the Aryan Society, was conspicuous by its absence in the Dravidian Society.

(*b*) The Dravidian laws of matrimonial alliances differed fundamentally from those of the Aryans. The Dravidians could marry within the fold of their blood relations, while the Aryans were denied this privilege.

(*c*) The social system of Dravidians, being matriarchal, was quite in contradiction to the patriarchal system of the Aryans.

(*d*) Their mode of life, customs, manners, religion and languages differed from those of the Aryans.

4. *The Aryans.* The Aryans, a white, long-headed, tall-statured and fine long-nosed people, entered India by the north-western passes and settled in the Punjab, clearing it of all the Dravidian settlers. Thence they spread eastwards and south-wards, mixing more and more with the native population and

thus getting their physical peculiarities modified. This mixture produced the hybrid civilisation of India in which Aryan and Dravidian elements are equally predominant.

Contributions of the Races to the Indian Culture[1]

The various races mentioned above have profoundly influenced the Indian culture. Each has contributed its own share to the common store-house of Indian life and civilisation. All aspects of Indian culture—material, mental and spiritual—have been enriched by such contributions most of which are perceived even to-day.

The primitive or jungle tribes have left distinct traces of their culture. Head-hunting, Canoe-cult, totemism and the disposal of the dead body by exposing it to the wind, light, animals and birds are the remnants of their civilisation. They have provided us the method of counting on the basis of twenty, have given us some words for fruits and animals and the ways of raising some important vegetables. Their habit of superstition, custom of worship of the Naga or serpentine deities and water spirits, and love for music and dancing still survive in India. The influence of the Mongoloids has been very little. Whatever influence they exercised was mainly regional or local.

The Dravidians had offered substantial contributions to the Indian culture. They were a fairly civilised race. They had evolved urban culture and had established cities where many of the refinements and luxuries of life could be enjoyed. The influence of the Dravid religious conceptions can be traced in the present Hindu religion. The worship of an image or a symbol of the divinity, offering of flowers, fruits and water to the deities during the Pooja ceremony, symbols of Gods and Goddesses like the lion or bull, the cult of Shiva, the conception of mother Goddess or Shakti-cult, and the institution of 'Yog' —all have been Dravidian. The Shiva-Uma cult of the present Hinduism has its root in the Dravidian religion. Now all these have become part and parcel of the Hindu religion. Again, the belief in *tantra* and *mantra* is supposed to be a Dravidian legacy. Dr. Smith says that the 'demons', originally worshipped by the

This account is based on a chapter "Race Movements and Pre-historic Culture" in the book '*The Vedic Age*'.

Dravidians, were adopted by the Brahmans. They had given them new names and identified them with orthodox Hindu Gods and Goddesses. Myths and legends of Gods and heroes current among the Dravidians survived the Aryan impact and with some modifications and improvements have been absorbed in the myths and legends of Gods, kings and sages in the Puranas. The pre-vedic antiquity of a number of heroic tales, legends and dynastic histories are possibly Dravidian.

It is said that some of the social customs and traditions of to-day are Dravidian such as the familiarity of the wife with her brother-in-law, younger brother of her husband ; reverence for the brother-in-law, elder to her husband ; unsewn cotton dress and the method of putting it on ; the use of milk products like ghee and curd, eating of rice, wheat and millet ; performance of certain wedding ceremonies and the use of turmeric and vermilion in the wedding ritual ; counting on the basis of eight, etc. The art of making boats and sailing on the high seas across is mostly Dravidian. They have led India in sea-borne trade. It is now proved that the elements of the Dravidian language have been incorporated in the Sanskrit language. Probably the Aryans had borrowed from the Dravidians the art of constructing forts and cities. The Vedic literature has many references to these. The Aryans consciously or unconsciously had borrowed, in course of time, many elements of the Dravidian religion, society, language and culture. "In the present day texture of Hindu culture and religion the warp appears to be Dravidian and the weft Aryan." The Aryan contributions to Indian culture are their philosophical doctrines, religious and spiritual conceptions and Sanskrit language and literature. All these together with others are dealt with later on as the legacies of the Aryans.

The Indus Valley Civilisation

In 1922 archæological excavations were carried out at Mohenjodaro in the Larkana district, Sind, and at Harappa in the Montgomery district of the Punjab—both now in the Western Pakistan. These coupled with smaller trial excavations at various other sites in Sind and in Baluchistan have undoubtedly proved that some five thousand years ago a highly civilised community flourished in these regions. This carried

back the antiquity of civilisation in India "nearly to the same period which witnessed the growth of ancient civilisations in Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia. The valley of the Indus thus takes its rank with the valleys of the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates as having contributed to the most ancient phase of human civilisation."[1]

Unfortunately we have no written records about the Indus Valley Civilisation. We are totally ignorant of the political history of the Indus Valley. We are unable to form an adequate idea of its culture and civilisation. Our information about the various aspects of this civilisation is very meagre, because the words engraved on the Mohenjodaro and Harappa seals have not been deciphered well so far. We, therefore, possess a vague and general idea of the subject. It is entirely derived from a careful examination of the objects unearthed at Mohenjodaro and Harappa.

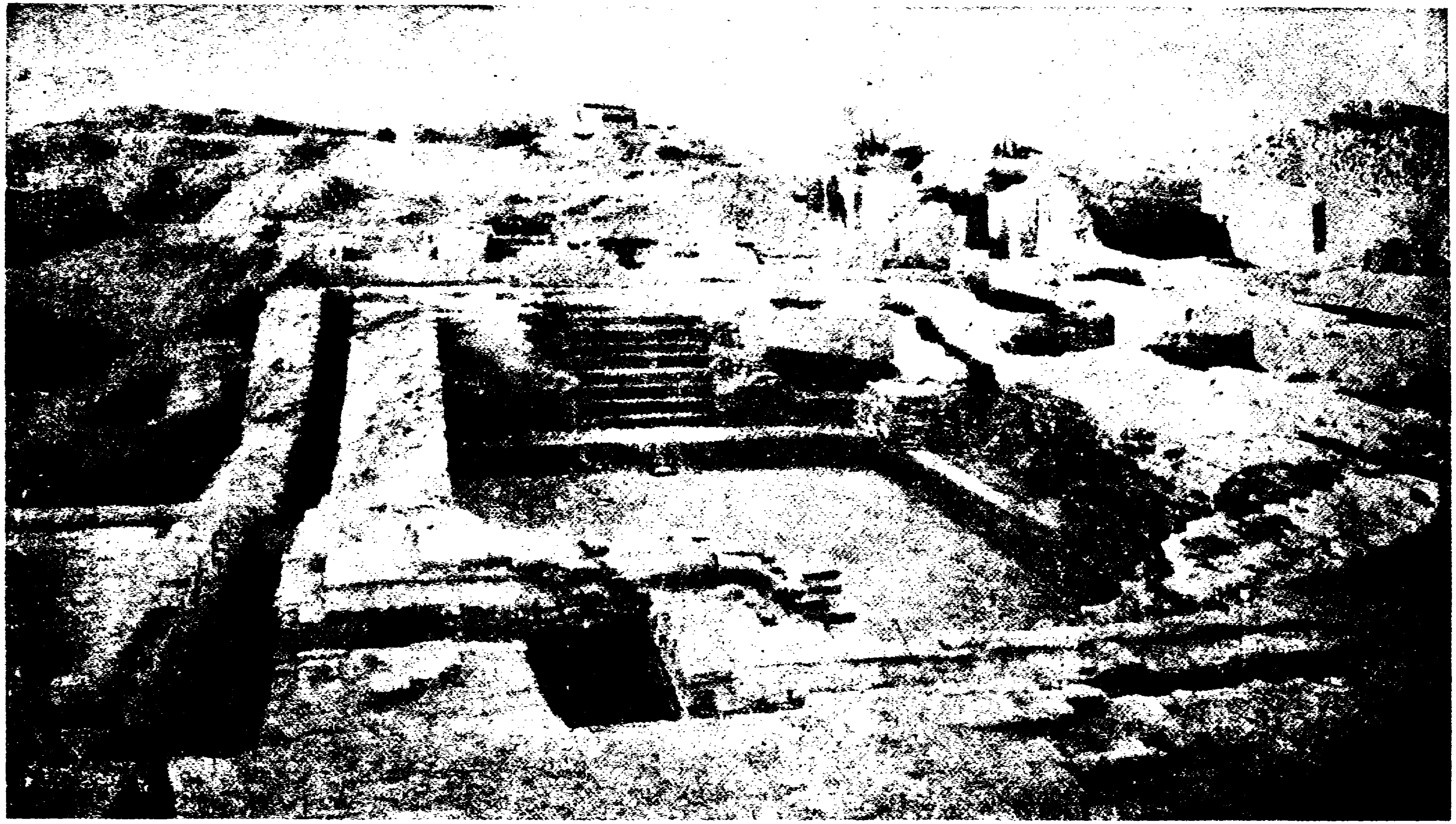
In the Sindhi language Mohenjodaro means 'Mound of the Dead'. It is the local name of a high mount situated in the plains of Larkana in a narrow strip between the Indus and the Western Nara canal. Here, nearly five thousand years ago, a city was built. It was successively destroyed and rebuilt no less than seven times. The ruins of this city have now been laid bare.

Here is an account of the discoveries made there :

The City

The city was fairly big and beautiful. It was designed skilfully. The dwelling houses were many in number. They varied in size 'from a small building with two rooms to a palatial structure having frontage of 85 feet and a depth of 97 feet, with outer walls four to five feet thick'. There were many architectural devices to beautify them. They were made of well-burnt good bricks and not stone. 'Sometimes very large bricks, measuring 20¼ inches long and 10½ inches broad and 3½ inches thick, were used.' The big houses had two or more storeys. They were furnished with paved floors, court-yards, kitchens

[1] See *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Valley Civilisation* (3 Volumes) by Sir John Marshall ; *The Vedic Age*, Chapter IX; *Prehistoric Civilisation of the Indus Valley* by K.N. Dixit.



THE GREAT BATH—MOHENJO-DARO.

with raised platforms, excellent doors, windows and narrow stairways. Almost every house had a well, drains, and comfortable bath-rooms, for which pottery drain pipes and receptacles were laid down, communicating them with the street drain or gutter. The elaborate drainage system was a unique feature of the city. Regular arches were unknown, but some corbelled arches were discovered. Square or rectangular pillars were constructed. In addition to dwelling houses there were a few spacious buildings of elaborate structure and design. Some of them had large pillared halls. They were supposed to have been palaces, temples or municipal or public assembly halls. "The most imposing structure in the city is the Great Bath. It consists of a large quadrangle in the centre with galleries and rooms on all sides, in some of which there were arrangements for hot-water bath. In the centre of the quadrangle is a large swimming enclosure, 39 feet long, 23 feet wide and about 8 feet deep. It has a flight of steps at either ends and is fed by a well, situated in one of the adjoining rooms. The water is discharged by a large drain with a corbelled roof more than six feet in height. The Great Bath is 180 feet long and 108 feet wide, and its outer walls are about 8 feet thick. The solidarity of the construction is amply borne out by the fact that it has successfully withstood the ravages of five thousand years."[1] The city had wide and straight streets. They were at right angles, running due north and south and east and west and they were furnished with an elaborate drainage system together with soak-pits for sediment. The main street, 33 feet wide, has been traced over half a mile and is unpaved, and the side roads are about half this width.

On the whole, the ruins of the city reveal "on this site, a large, populous and flourishing town, whose inhabitants freely enjoyed, to a degree unknown elsewhere in the ancient world, not only the sanitary conveniences but also the luxuries and comforts of a highly developed municipal life."[2] It can fairly be concluded that the art of building had reached a high degree of perfection and adequate water supply and efficient drainage system demonstrate an advanced state of civic authority.

[1] *An Advanced History of India*, p. 16.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 16.

The People

The essential features of the social, economic and religious condition of the inhabitants of the city were as follows :

Food. The food of the people consisted of beef, mutton, pork, poultry, turtles, and tortoises. But wheat was their principal article of food ; barley and palm-date were also familiar Fish was commonly used. Milk was used and vegetables and fruits seem to have been known though there is no positive evidence.

Dress and Ornaments. Cotton fabrics were in common use, but wool was also used. Their dress was simple ; men used a shawl which was drawn over the left shoulder and under the right, so as to leave the right arm free and in the sitting posture came down to the feet. It formed the upper garment. The lower garment was like a modern *Dhoti*. Men kept short beards and whiskers and sometimes the upper lip was shaved. Their hair was combed backwards and was either cut short or coiled in a knot on the top of the head. Ornaments were worn by both men and women of all classes. Necklaces, fillets, armlets, finger-rings and bangles were worn by both men and women ; and girdles, nose-studs, ear-rings and anklets by women alone. There was great variety in the shape and design of these ornaments and some of them were of singular beauty. The rich made the ornaments of gold, silver, ivory, faience and other semi-precious stones like lapis-lazuli, jasper, carnelian, agate or onyx ; the ornaments of the poor were made of copper, bone, shell and terra-cotta.

People knew the art of toilet and cosmetics. Toilet jars were made of ivory, metal, pottery and stone. Ladies were well acquainted with the toilet culture. It appears that they knew the use of collyrium, face-paint and other cosmetics.

The use of stones and metals. As stone was not found there, it was imported from other places and so was sparingly used. As no scrap of iron is found at Mohenjodaro, this metal was obviously unknown to the people. The metals known to the people of the Indus Valley were gold, silver, copper, tin, lead and bronze. Gold was not locally procured and probably it was brought from southern India.

Amusements. Among amusements, dancing to the accom-

paniment of the drum, marbles and some kind of game played with a marker board and dice pieces appear to have been practised. Hunting was indulged in. People were interested in fishing.

Household Articles. The earthenware vessels of rich variety were made with potter's wheel and were either plain or painted, with a slip of red ochre, often so highly burnished that it had the appearance of Chinese lacquer. Very often the pots were ornamented with a pattern of concentric circles in black, and occasionally with figures of trees, birds and animals. Some of the pottery was ornamented with clay knobs. In rare cases they were glazed. Vessels of copper, bronze, silver and porcelain were known, though very rarely used. Quite a large number of bowls, dishes, cups, saucers, vases, basins, pans, jar-stands, goblets and stone-jars of different forms have been found there. "Among other articles of domestic use may be mentioned spindles and spindle whorls made of baked earth, porcelain and shell ; needles and combs made of bone or ivory ; axes, chisels, saws, knives, sickles, fishhooks and razors made of copper and bronze ; and small cubic blocks of hard stone, probably used as weights."

Toys. Children's toys were various, interesting and ingenious. Usually they were clay models of birds, animals, whistles, rattles, men, women etc. There were wheeled carts and chairs.

Weights and Measures. People used a large number of weights. They ranged from large ones to be lifted with a rope to very small ones used by jewellers. Cubical weights were most common. The unit weight had the value of ·8750 gms, the largest weight being 10970 gms. A bronze-bar with suspended copper pans was used as a scale. 'It seems that the decimal system was known' to the people of the Indus Valley.

Domesticated Animals. They had domesticated animals such as humped bull, buffalo, sheep, pig, dog, elephant and camel, but the cat seems to be unknown. It is doubtful whether the horse was domesticated. They used carts in which bullocks were used.

Medicines. We know little about the medicines used by the people. Pieces of a coal-black substance forming a dark brown substance of water (possibly *Silajit*), cuttle bone, horns

of the deer and antelope, coral and leaves of the *nim* tree have been discovered. All of them have medicinal qualities.

Weapons of War. People were acquainted with axes, spears, daggers, maces and slings with comparatively fewer specimens of bows and arrows. Swords, shields, helmets or any other defensive weapon are conspicuous by their absence. The weapons of war, offensive in character, were usually made of copper and bronze. Their inferior quality suggests that the users were unwarlike in their habits.

Seals. Above 550 seals have been discovered. They are made of paste, stone or steatite of various colours. On most of them is finely engraved the figure of some animal or other, bull, unicorn, elephant, antelope or the like but the absence of the cow or the horse is significant. All of them contain a short record inscribed in a sort of pictorial writing above and (sometimes below) these animals. But unfortunately the writing still remains undeciphered.

Fine Arts. "The representations of the animals carved on these seals often exhibit a high degree of excellence. A few stone images found at Harappa recall the finish and excellence of Greek statues and show a high degree of development in the sculptor's art." There were good sculptures. The artistic and aesthetic taste of the people is evident from their fine painted pottery, utensils and ornaments of various shapes and designs.

Knowledge of Writing. Though no documents on stones or backed clay tablets have been discovered, but seals with figures of animals and objects and inscriptions in a script are excavated. This shows that the people were familiar with a pictographic system of writing, each sign standing for a particular word or object. Later on, certain marks and strokes were developed. Probably they were for vowel signs. It seems that the direction of writing was from right to left, but in some cases it was from right to left in the first line and left to right in the second.[1]

Trade and Commerce. The small-sized seals, found there, were most probably used in connection with trade. Undoubtedly there are evidences to prove that the people traded not only with other parts of India but also with many countries of

History of Ancient India by Dr. R. S. Tripathi, p. 23.



Humped Bull on Seals from Mohenjo-daro.

Asia, Egypt and Crete. In exchange they secured tin, copper and precious stones from beyond India.

Arts and Crafts. They practised agriculture and cultivated wheat, barley, cotton and date-palm. There were important industrial classes like the potter, the carpenter, the mason, the blacksmith, the goldsmith, the jeweller, the ivory-worker and stonecutter. Spinning was freely practised in houses as it is evident from a large number of spindle-whorls discovered there. The potter's wheels, kiln-burnt brick, the boring of hard substances like carnelian, and the casting and alloy of metals indicated the great advance in technical knowledge. The *cire perdue* process of casting was practised and an exquisite little bronze figure of a dancing girl, found there, is an almost perfect piece of work. Equally is the high aesthetic sense shown by the beautiful designs of ornaments, the superb relief figures and engravings on seals and the execution of fine stone statues. People possessed artistic skill of a high order and they could delineate with vigour and effect.

Burial Rites. Various burial rites seem to have been in use, perhaps by different stocks or tribes. Generally, there were three methods of burial—complete burial, fractional burial and post-cremation burial. At Mohenjodaro the absence of cemetery seems to point to cremation, but a large burial ground has been found at Harappa. The ashes were sometimes placed in urns ; at other times, unburnt bones were collected and buried in jars.

Religion. Neither temples, nor shrines or altars, or definite cult objects have been discovered in the Indus Valley. However, one of the main objects of worship of the people was Mother-Goddess. The cult of the Divine Mother was widely prevalent. Many figurines of this Mother-Goddess on pottery, seals and amulets have come to light. People believed in a female energy as the source of all creation. Along with this, a male-god was also worshipped. On one particular seal we find a figure with two horns on two sides of a tall head-dress, surrounded by wild animals and sitting in an erect meditative posture or the yoga posture. This explains to certain extent the later conception of Shiva. Lord Shiva is regarded as the *Mahayogin* and is styled *Pasupati* or the Lord of the beasts, his

chief attributes being three eyes and the trisula or the trident. Now the apparent yoga posture of the figure on the Mohenjodaro seal justifies the epithet *Mahayogin* and the figures of animals around him explain the epithet *Pasupati.* The two horns with the tall head-dress might have easily given rise to the conception of a trisula or trident with three prongs. The identification of the male-god with Shiva is further strengthened by the discovery of stone pieces which look exactly like a *Shiva-linga.* the form in which Shiva is almost worshipped universally at present.[1]

In addition to the worship of Shiva and Sakti (Mother-Goddess) both in human and symbolic forms, people followed animism. It means worship of stones, trees and animals in the belief that these are abodes of spirits, good or evil. They regarded some trees givers of wisdom and life. There were two forms of tree worship—one in which the tree itself was worshipped in its material form, and the other in which the tree was personified and endowed with human shape and attributes. Perhaps the *pipal* tree was regarded sacred. Bulls, tigers, rhinoceros, elephants, crocodiles etc., were worshipped. The dove was looked upon as sacred. Some form of *Naga* worship was also practised. The representation of *Swastik* and the wheel on some seals make us believe that though actual worship of Sun was not there, but it was represented symbolically.

Modern Hinduism possesses many of the features stated above. In fact Shiva and Kali, the worship of *Lingam,* the *Bhakti* cult (loving devotion and attachment to a personal God), the worship of tree-spirits and other features of popular Hinduism were well established in India long before the Aryans came. Many present-day forms of worship and religious conceptions existed in pre-Aryan days. We, therefore, cannot but conclude that there is an organic relationship between the ancient culture of the Indus Valley and the Hinduism of to-day. The religion of the Indus people was the lineal progenitor of Hinduism.

The Age of the Indus Valley Civilisation

This Mohenjodaro civilisation has been called the "Indus Civilisation", as the river system of the Indus played a great

An Advanced History of India, p. 21.

part in its evolution, though the civilisation was by no means confined to the Indus area. The date of the Indus civilisation cannot be laid down exactly. On careful consideration of the available material it seems that the Indus Valley culture ranged between 2800—2500 B. C. It is now believed that this civilisation flourished about 3000 B. C. But it must have had a long history of antecedent development before it reached the stage that we find.

Extent and Origin of the Indus Valley Culture and Civilisation. The Indus Valley Civilisation embraced the whole of Sind, South Punjab and Baluchistan. But no trace of it has been discovered in the valley of the Ganges. This naturally raises a question where did the Indus Valley culture originate. Did it evolve independently in India ? Is it exclusively Indian ? Was it an offshoot of any other culture in India ? We cannot answer these questions at this stage of our knowledge.

Relation of the Indus Valley Culture and Civilisation with those of the West. Approximately five thousand years before, advanced civilisation flourished on the banks of the Nile, the Euphrates and the Tigris. They belonged to an age when the use of metals (but not of iron) was fully known, but the use of stone was not yet altogether given up. This age is known as the Chaleolithic age—"an age in which arms and utensils of stone continue to be used side by side with those of copper and bronze." The Indus Valley Civilisation resembles a great deal with these above-mentioned ancient civilisations of the great river-system in Egypt, Sumer and Mesopotamia. The developed urban life, the use of the potter's wheel, kiln-burnt bricks, copper and bronze vessels and pictorial writings are some of the common distinct characteristics of all these civilisations. There was close commercial relation between the Indus Valley civilisation and those of the Egypt, Sumer and Mesopotamia as evident from the discovery of the seals of Mohenjodaro in those countries. This raises a few questions. What was the relation between the Indus Valley civilisation and those of Egypt, Mesopotamia and other western lands ? Did these civilisations develop independently ? Was the development of the Indus Valley civilisation due to the contact and impact of these western civilisations ? Did the civilisation spread from the Indus Valley

to the west or vice versa ? These questions cannot be answered definitely at this stage of our knowledge of pre-historic period.

Comparison between the Civilisations of the Indus Valley and that of the Indo-Aryans. The next question is the relationship of the Indus Valley culture with the Vedic Civilisation of the Indo-Aryans. There is not a shadow of resemblance between the Indus and the Vedic culture. There are striking differences between the two. The people of the Indus Valley lived in well-populated cities and towns with all the amenities of a developed city life. The Aryans were a pastoral, agricultural and rural people. They had no experience of the complexities of city life. The Indus Valley people had the knowledge of admirable planning and highly developed sense of hygiene and sanitation. The Aryans had no such thing. At Mohenjodaro silver seems to have been more common than gold. Their utensils were sometimes made of stone, earth, copper and bronze. In the times of the Rigveda, the chief metals were gold, copper or bronze and it is later in the age of Yajurveda and the Atharveda that silver and iron are mentioned. Certain distinguishing elements of the Aryan culture—absence of watery animals, horse, cow and iron—are absent in the Indus culture. The Vedic Aryans ate meat but not fish, while in the Indus Valley fish, turtles and other watery animals were common. At Mohenjodaro horse is unknown but it is frequently mentioned in Rigveda. The cow had no special importance in the Indus Valley culture, while among the Vedic Aryans, she is considered as a sacred animal worthy of protection and honour. Similarly there were also important differences in respect of religious beliefs and practices. The Aryans worshipped Forces of Nature, the Indus Valley people did not. The Vedic Aryans worshipped the cow while the Indus people reserved their veneration for bulls. "The Vedic religion is normally aniconic while at Mohenjodaro the traces of iconism are present everywhere." Among the gods, *Sakti* (the mother-goddess) and *Shiva* are the chief deities of the Indus Valley, whereas in the Vedic pantheon *Shiva* has no place and the position of the female is inferior to that of the male deity. The worship of images was familiar in the Indus Valley, but almost unknown to the Vedic Aryans. Fire is considered a sacred thing in the Vedic age ; it is a god to be worshipped but

in the Indus Valley it had no importance. The Indus Valley people were well acquainted with the art of writing, the Aryans of the Rigvedic Age were not. There was good progress of architecture and sculpture in the Indus culture, whereas the Aryans had no such achievements in this direction.

On account of striking dissimilarities, the Indus Valley Civilisation is usually considered as different from and anterior to the culture of the Vedic period. The latter, although later, was unrelated to the former and had an independent evolution. This also fits in well with the generally accepted chronological scheme. Because, the Indus Valley Civilisation and culture goes back to the third millennium B. C., while the date usually assigned to the Rigveda does not go beyond the second millennium B. C. Though some place the Vedic Civilisation before that of the Indus Valley, there are evidences to warrant a definite conclusion for the priority of the Indus Valley Civilisation over that of the Rigveda. Moreover, the recent discoveries in the valley of the Narbada, Malwa, indicate that other equally ancient pre-vedic civilisations existed in different parts of India. Now, we can no longer accept the view that the Vedic Civilisation is the sole foundation of all subsequent civilisations in India. One thing is certain and can no longer be contested —*Civilisation did not come to India with the Aryans*. There is not the least doubt that the Indus Valley Civilisation has been a very important contributory factor to the growth and development of culture and civilisation in India.[1]

Race of the Indus Valley People

Now there is the question of the race of the people among whom the Indus Valley culture and civilisation evolved. Some hold the opinion that the Indus Valley people were the kith and kin of the Sumerians. Others hold that they were Dravidians. Some again believe that these two were identical because of the common features of their civilisations. The supporters of this view argue that the Dravidians once inhabited the whole of

[1] See also *Mohenjodaro* by Sir John Marshall, Vol. I, Chapter VIII. Prof. Radhakumud Mookarji and Beck hold the opinion that the Indus Valley Civilisation is the earliest civilisation in the world.

India, including the Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan and later on they gradually migrated to Mesopotamia. To strengthen their arguments they point out that the Dravidian language is still spoken by the Brahui people of Baluchistan. Then some opine that the "Indus" people were Aryans. But this view at present finds little support. It is also possible that the people of the Indus Valley might have belonged to an altogether separate race. It is rather impossible to come to any definite conclusion about the authors of the Indus Valley culture.

Harappa

Harappa is an important site in the Montgomery District in the Punjab. It is about four miles north-east of Harappa Road, a station on the North-West Railway, now in Pakistan. It is a hundred miles or so from Lahore. Like Mohenjodaro the excavations have yielded valuable results. Here also, people lived in cities. Their houses were made of bricks. They were well furnished with baths and drains. Bathrooms had paved floor. The most remarkable and largest building discovered at Harappa is the Great Granary, measuring 169 feet by 135 feet. It consists of two blocks, each having six halls with corridors which open towards the outside. Each hall is further partitioned into four narrow divisions. Another discovery at Harappa is the workmen's quarters. They comprise fourteen small houses each of which is rectangular and has a courtyard and two rooms. People cultivated wheat, barley, rice, vegetables, peas and sesamums. Like the people at Mohenjodaro they domesticated animals. They knew the cat well. Men and women lived the same way as they did at Mohenjodaro. But they differed in certain respects. Many of the ladies wore a distinctive headdress. It rose like a fan from the back of the head. In the case of some other women it formed part of the coffure. There were a large number of jewelled ornaments including necklaces and bracelets. It seems that males did not wear jewellery. The art of sculpture was known to the people as is evident from some statues discovered at Harappa. Seals that were found in large numbers there also bear all kinds of figures on them.

Destruction of the Indus Valley Civilisation

How the Indus Valley Civilisation and culture was destroyed is only a piece of historical speculation. Either "a flood

of the Indus or its gradual drifting away from the city might have rendered the place unfertile. The rainfall of Sind, which must have been much more copious than it is now, might have decreased about the second millennium before Christ, and Sind might have shown signs of turning into a desert as it is now." Or, the inhabitants of the Indus Valley, whose great wealth must have induced the wild tribes from the hills to attack, were invaded and put to the sword. Groups of skeletons, including those of women and children, have been discovered, some in a big room, others at the foot of a staircase leading down to a well and others again in street. All this suggests that they met a violent death—now a forgotten tragedy. Or else, the conquering Aryans, or some other tribes from outside India, might have sacked Mohenjodaro and destroyed its civilisation. It is more probable that the Indus Valley Civilisation reached a state of decadence and was overwhelmed by the continuous attacks of the Aryans who were more vigorous and perhaps better equipped than the Indus Valley people. "The organisation of the pre-Aryan peoples went down before the Aryans, another example of the recurring fact in history that decaying civilisations, whatever their material advancement, cannot stand-up to barbarian invasions." Obviously, the pastoral Aryans slowly conquered the indigenous non-Aryan population and assimilated their civilisation.

Chapter 3

The Vedic Age

WE have described in the preceding chapter the rich Indus Valley Civilisation. Far different is the picture of another civilisation, which flourished in India later on. The people who evolved this culture called themselves Aryas or Aryans. They entered India from the north-west. They belonged to the group of the people known as the Indo-Europeans. It has been long a matter of discussion what region the Indo-Europeans inhabited before their final separation. Central Asia, Central Europe, the Steppes of Russia, the Polar Region, each of these countries has been suggested, but no definite solution has been arrived at by the scholars. However, the consensus of opinion is that their original home was somewhere in Central Asia.[1]

The Aryans

From their original home, the Indo-European people began to move in many directions. One such branch moved in the direction of Persia and India, and lived at some place for a sufficiently long time. To this branch the name of Arya is applied. This branch further developed the original Indo-European religion ; they created new gods and a class of people, the priests, to act as intermediaries between themselves and their gods ; they conceived of a moral order ruling the universe and evolved the institution of sacrifices in which the cult of fire pre-

[1] The problem of the original home of the Aryans is well discussed in Chapter X and its Appendix, *History and Culture of the Indian People in Vedic Age*.

dominated. At last, they divided into two branches, one entering Persia and the other India.

There are evidences outside India to show that in Asia Minor and other countries in Western Asia there was some activity of the Aryans. Some inscriptions of about the fourteenth century B. C., found at Boghaz-Koi in Cilicia (Asia Minor), the capital of the ancient Hittites, mention some Aryan deities such as Indra, Varuna, Mitra and the Nasatyas (Asvins). The kings of the Mitanni in the upper Euphrates invoked Aryan deities to witness and safeguard a treaty made in 1400 B. C. The Kassite princes, who held Babylonia for about six centuries (Circa B. C. 1800 to 1200) used Aryan names. The relationship of the Aryans who entered the Punjab with the inhabitants of the Iranian plateau is shown by the close resemblance between their language and sacred books. Some scholars hold that these facts indicate that these regions were visited by the Aryans in the course of their ramblings before they entered India ; others however hold the opinion that these Aryan influences were the result of contact, commercial or otherwise, with the Aryans of India.

The Aryans who entered India are known as the Indo-Aryans. In contrast to the then inhabitants of India, the Aryans appear to have been a comparatively fair folk with long heads, straight noses, well-developed foreheads and a high facial angle. Their advent in India has been variously dated, from B. C. 5000 and even earlier to B. C. 1500. Though any accurate date is impossible to fix but some date between B. C. 2500 and 2000 seems to fulfil all conditions.

The Aryan migration into India was gradual. They did not enter India in one stream. The immigration was a prolonged process distributed over a period of a few centuries. The Aryans came not as invaders but as peaceful emigrants with their flock of cattle, their wives and families, their household goods and gods ; successive waves of immigrants followed one another at considerable intervals. But their entry was not unopposed. As they advanced in easterly direction, they came into conflict with peoples living in fortified areas (*puras* and *durgas*), under their own kings and chiefs. They are contemptuously spoken of in the Vedas as *Dasyus* or slaves. The

Rigveda itself describes a hundred-pillared fort of the enemies that the Aryans had to contend with. The fact that many of the hymns of the Vedas are addressed to the gods for assistance in fighting their enemies reveal to us that the Aryans waged prolonged wars with the non-Aryans. The high god of the Vedas, *Indra*, who is described as *Purandara* (the shaker of cities), is stated to have destroyed many cities for the Aryans. There is also an interesting account of an attack on a hundred towns of an aboriginal king. The Vedic hymns constantly refer to the wars between *Divodasa*, the ruler of the tribe of the Bharatas, and the Dasyu prince *Sambara*. Gradually, however, the contest became less fierce. The pre-Aryan inhabitants were completely conquered by the Aryans who intermixed with the vanquished. As time went on, Indo-Aryans became absorbed in the population of the country, though they left behind them indelible traces of their culture.

The Vedic Literature

The only source of information about the Aryans in India is the vast literature known as the Vedas. The word Veda comes from the root *Vid*, to know. It means knowledge in general. It is specially applied to a branch of literature which has been handed down from time immemorial by verbal transmission and is declared to be sacred knowledge or divine revelation (*Sruti*). The Vedas are four in number—Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda and Atharveda.

The parts which constitute the Vedas are—(1) the *Samhitas* of the four Vedas ; (2) the *Brahmanas* attached to each of the Samhitas ; and (3) the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads*, mostly attached to the Brahmanas, but in reality forming separate and unconnected treatises. The *Samhitas* are the books of hymns or psalms, which are sung to the praise of various gods. But the Atharveda *Samhita* deals with magic spells and witchcraft The *Brahmanas* are treatises relating to prayer and sacrificial ceremony. They seek to explain the hymns of *Samhitas* in an orthodox and dogmatic way. Their subject-matter is ritual and the language is prose. *Aranyakas* are the last books of the *Brahmanas* dealing with the philosophical doctrines, the allegorical significance of rites and the mystic meaning of

the text of the *Samhitas*. They were considered too sacred to be read anywhere else but in the forest (aranya). Lastly, the *Upanishads*, "secret or esoteric doctrine", are mostly either imbeded in the *Aranyakas* or form their supplements. They deal with spiritual topics—the universal soul, the Absolute, the individual self, the origin of the world and the mysteries of nature.

The classes of literary work named above are alone classed as *Sruti* or Revelation and constitute the Vedic Literature proper. But closely connected with them are auxiliary treatises, though not regarded as a part of the revelation, there exists a class of composition called *Vedanga*, "members or limbs of the Veda". They are styled *Smriti*, or literature handed down by tradition from olden times. They originated mostly in Vedic schools (Charanas) and their contents are often expressed in condensed style of prose intended for memorisation, to which the name of *Sutra* is given. The *Vedangas* are six in number, *viz.*, *Siksha* (phonetics), *Kalpa* (ritual), *Vyakarana* (grammar), *Nirukta* (etymology), *Chhandas* (metrics) and *Jyotisha* (astronomy).

The Age of the Vedic Literature

The upper date-limit of the Vedic Literature is inseparably connected with the coming of the Aryans to India. That event took place in the third millenium B.C. Scholars regarded 1000 B.C.—which was merely looked upon by Max Muller as the probable minimum limit—as the date of composition of the Rigveda Samhita which is the oldest collection of hymns in the Vedic literature. On the other hand, scholars like Professor Jacobi and Shri B. G. Tilak have come to the conclusion that some of these hymns were composed at least 4000 years before Christ. Prof. Winternitz who is considered as the latest authority on this subject argues that the age of the Rigveda must be placed nearer the date assumed by Jacobi and Tilak rather than that advocated by Max Muller. Thus, though it is impossible to assign precise dates to the composition of the Vedas, yet the period between 2500 to 1200 B.C. may be regarded as a fair approximation. However, it should be noted that the composition of the Vedas spread over a period of time exceeding a thousand years. Though it is very difficult to set up precise

date-limits, the Vedic Age is usually dealt with under two heads —the Early Vedic Age, and the Later Vedic Age.

The Early Vedic Age

The Sapta-Sindhu, the Area of the Early Vedic Age—The geographical area occupied by the Rigvedic tribes is clearly shown by the mention of certain rivers which can easily be identified. The most important among these include those of Afghanistan and the Punjab. They are "the Kubha (Kabul), Suvastu (Swat), the Krumu (Kurram), the Gomati (Gumal), the Sindhu (Indus), the Sushoma (Sohan), the Vitasta (Jhelum), the Asikni (Chenab), the Parushni (Ravi), the Marudvridha (Maruwardwan), the Vipas (Bias), the Sutudri (Sutlaj), the Saraswati (Sarsuti), the Drishadvati (Rakshi or Chitang), the Jamuna, the Ganga and the Sarayu. The mention of these rivers implies the possession by the Aryans of a considerable portion of the country stretching from eastern Afghanistan to the Upper Valley of the Ganges. The major part of this area came to be known as Sapta-Sindhu—the Land of the Seven Rivers." Among the mountains frequent mention is made of the Himalayas and some of its peaks but Rigveda knows nothing of the Vindhya and other mountain ranges of India. Similarly, amongst the rivers the name of the Narbada does not occur. The tiger which is so commonly seen in the forests of Bengal is not mentioned in the Rigveda. It may, therefore, be safely inferred that in the Rigvedic Age, the Aryans had not yet established settlements in the Southern direction nor had they yet advanced towards the east beyond a part of the Jamuna Doab. Only in the later age they occupied the East and the South.

Political Organisations

Political Units. The lowest unit of the political and social organisation of the Rigvedic people was the patriarchal family. The higher units were known *grama*, *vis* and *jana*. We do not know the precise relationship between the *grama*, the *vis* and the *jana*. The *grama* (village) consisted of several families. Each had agricultural lands attached to it. It was a definite political unit under the headman (gramani). He used to lead the villagers during war or battle and attended the meetings of the Sabha or Samiti. The *vis* was a canton or group in the form of collection of villages under *Visapati*. He was also a

military leader. The *vis* grew into a tribe (Jana) whose members were bound together by real or supposed ties of kingship. The villages were scattered over the country, sometimes they were linked together with roads. Originally all land in the village belonged to the tribe but later the idea developed that it belonged to the monarch.

Tribes. The people were divided into many tribes (*Jana*). Each was under a king. He was styled as the protector (*Gopa*) of the *Jana*. The tribes which acquired great importance and are frequently referred to as the Five Peoples (Panchajanah) are the Purus, Tugvasas, Yadus, Anus and Druhyus. It is very difficult to locate these tribes now.

The Polity. Monarchy was the prevailing form of government among the Rigvedic tribes. But non-monarchical form to some communities was also known. There are "references to *jana* with the *ganapati* or *jyeshtha* (elder) as its head. The mention of the term *jyeshtha* which corresponds to *jetthaka* of the Pali texts, points to some sort of organisation parallel to that of the well-known tribal republics of early Buddhist times." Hereditary monarchy was the normal mode of government. But elective monarchy was perhaps also known. In the Atharva-Veda and the Great Epic there are many explicit references to the election of the *Rajan* to the kingship by the people. In the Rigveda itself the need of the people's approval, for steady and unvaccillating sovereignity, is emphasised in the consecration hymns. In the Rigveda, however, there is no trace of any terrestrial kingship like that of the Mauryan or Gupta Age, though the idea of a universal monarch (visvasya bhuvanasya raja) is met with.

The king occupied a position of pre-eminence in the tribe. He lived in pomp and majesty and his authority was binding on the people. He was required to be "*Mitra* in kindness, *Varuna* in virtues and *Indra* in valour." The ideal of kingship was very high. He felt responsible for any sin or crime committed within his territory. His coronation oath was—"May all his subjects desire him for their king and may the kingdom never fall from him." His another oath before the people was—"May my life and offspring be cut off if I work against your interests." He was the father who was to look after his children—the subjects. His foremost duty was the protection of the tribe

and the territory and maintenance of priests for the performance of sacrifices. He fought against external enemies and led the people in war. Efficiency in leading, organising armies, or in propitiating gods must be shown by him in the field. He was expected to rule according to the customary law and was helped in the administration by a number of functionaries of whom pretty frequently mentioned in the Rigveda are the *Senani*, the *Gramani* and the *Purohita*. The Senani was the military commander appointed by the king ; Gramani or the leader of a village seems to have been a village officer. He exercised both civil and military functions, and the *Purohita* or the Chaplain was the most important state official of great dignity. He was the Brahman adviser of the king. He composed hymns in praise of his patron's exploits, invoking the favour of gods upon him for which he was magnificently rewarded. He was often hereditarily attached to the court. Professor Keith remarks that "the Vedic *Purohita* was the fore-runner of the Brahman statesmen who from time to time in India have shown conspicuous ability in the management of affairs ; and there is no reason to doubt that a Visvamitra or a Vasishtha was a most important element of the government of the early vedic realm." As the protector of the people, the king might have e ercised some judicial power over criminals, but the ordinary administration of justice seems to have rested on the family or the village. The punishment for the murder was the payment of blood money, which varied according to the status of the victim ; the fine for the slaughter of a man of high rank might be hundred cows, to be paid to the dead man's relative. Thieves were put in the stocks and an insolvent debtor might be sold in slavery. Minor cases, criminal and civil, were settled by the village council. There is no evidence to show that the king had proprietory right over the land which was held individually by the people. But to carry on the government of the state, the tribesmen did give their land. Tribute was exacted from conquered kings and he received gifts from his subjects. The king also acted as the representative of his tribe on public occasions and religious functions such as the performance of a sacrifice offered to the gods to ensure victory to the tribe. He had a system of espionage.

Popular Assemblies. The king, though the lord of the people, did not govern without their consent. The business[1] of the tribe was carried out in a popular assembly called *Samiti*. Princes and people both were represented in Samiti. There is also reference to another assembly styled *Sabha* resembling to modern council of elders. Others hold that it was a village or clan assembly. Certain passages of the Rigveda seem to associate the *Sabha* with the men of wealth, opulence and goodly form. This supports the view that it functioned as a Council of Elders rather than an assembly of the whole tribe. The *Sabha* and the *Samiti* might have had some administrative, legislative and judicial powers but how they were exercised cannot be determined. From the above account we can infer that whatever the form of the government might have been the head of State was nowhere absolute. His power was limited and controlled by the Samiti and Sabha constructed on the basis of the tribe, the clan, the district and the nation. In fact, the Samiti and Sabha formed the popular part of the political organisation of the early Aryans.

The Mode of Warfare. War was an important institution of the Aryans in the Rigvedic Age. The Aryan tribes not only fought against the aborigines but frequently they fought with one another. There was no regular army, the masses forming the militia in times of necessity. However, the army must have included foot soldiers, later called *Patti*, as well as *Rathins* or warriors who fought from chariots. "Prancing horses" are also referred to in certain battle songs. But elephant was not as yet used in war. The leader of the army was styled *Senani*. The soldiers wore coats of mail, metal helmets, shields for protection and their offensive weapons chiefly consisted of bows and arrows, swords, spears and axes as well as lances and slings. They used two kinds of arrows—one was poisoned and it had a head of horn ; the other was made of copper or was iron-headed (*ayomukham*). There are references to the *pur charishnu* or moving fort. Probably it might have been an engine for attacking strong-holds. Banners were used in war and the

Refer to Prof. Keith's article in *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I.

drums and trumpets were used to provide war music. The Aryans used to invoke the blessings of their gods before and during the war against their enemies.

Social Life

Family. The Aryans developed a healthy social life. The family rather than the individual was regarded as the social and political unit. The members of a family lived in the same house built of wood or reed. Every house had a fire-place (*agnishala*), besides a sitting-room and apartments for the ladies. The father was the head of the family and was styled *grihapati* or *dampati*. He exercised autocratic powers over the members. Though usually kind and affectionate, yet occasionally he acted cruelly. The story of a father who blinded his son for his extravagance bears testimony to this statement. The head of the family, usually the senior or male member, with his wife performed all religious ceremonies and was helped by her in the management of household affairs.

Women. In that age women were held in great respect. They were honoured in the home and respected outside. There is no evidence to show that women had a subordinate position in society. In intellectual and spiritual life, they occupied the same position as men. There was no *parda* system, as is known at present, nor the burning of widows on the pyre (Sati) was prevalent there. The education of the girls was not neglected. The Rigveda mentions the names of learned women like Vishwavara, Ghosha and Apala, who attained to the rank of Rishis and composed *hymns*. If some of the Vedic poets and philosophers were women, there were women warriors also. Girls were given in marriage when they attained full maturity.[1] The girls, sometimes at least, had chosen their own husbands with the consent of their parents. The swayamvara system of later times was, thus, foreshadowed in the Vedic times. "The woman, gentle in nature and graceful in form, selects from among many, her own loved one as her husband." (*Rigveda*) Marriage for love as well as for money was not unknown. It

[1] *Women in Rig Veda* by B.S. Upadhyay ; *Position of Women in Hindu Civilisation* by Dr. A. S. Altekar.

was regarded as a sacrament. Weddings were celebrated in the house of the bride's parents. The marriage ritual was picturesque and elaborate. The hymns about the marriage show the sublime outlook of the Vedic Aryans. The hymns are :—

The priest addresses the bride—"Enter O bride, with auspicious signs the home of thy husband. Do good to our male servants and to our female servants, and to our cattle."...

"Free from the evil eye, thy husband hurting not,
Kind to our beast, be friendly, full of energy,
Bear heroes, love the gods, and live in happiness,
Bring welfare to our bipeds and our quadrupeds."

(*Rigveda*, X, 85)

Ordinarily a man married one wife, and thus monogamy was the usual rule. Polygamy was however practised and was probably confined to kings and great chiefs only. There is no reference to polyandry. Remarriage of widows was permitted but it does not seem to have been the rule. The standard of female morality was pretty high. Women were not independent persons in the eye of the law. They had to look to their male relations for aid and support. They had honourable position in the house. The term *dampati*, used in the Rigvedic period, designates the mistress as well as the master of the house. The wife was admitted to full religious rites and participated in all the major ceremonies and offerings of the husband. She acted as the queen of his home. There is no evidence in the Rigveda that women were isolated in social functions or gatherings. On the other hand, ladies trooped to festal gatherings "decked, shining forth with sunbeams."

Dress and Ornaments. The clothes were of different hues and were made of cotton, deer-skin or wool. The garment consisted of three parts—an under-garment called *nivi*, a garment called *vasa* or *paridhana* and a mantle termed *adhivasa*, *atka* or *drapi*. Often garments were embroidered with gold. People frequently used gold ornaments and floral wreaths especially at the time of festivals. Both men and women wore turbans. The hair was worn long and combed. Women used to fold their long locks in broad plaits.

Food. Wheat and barley formed the staple food of the

people. Milk and its various products such as curd and butter and many kinds of vegetables and fruits were used. Meat was also taken, especially at the great feasts, weddings and family gatherings. But the meat of the cow was not taken because gradually the slaying of cow was disfavoured as is shown from the name *aghnya* (not to be killed) applied to it in many passages. They obtained drinking water from rivers, springs and *avatas* or artificial wells from which it was raised by a wheel of stone and poured into buckets of wood. They drank distilled liquor (*sura*) on ordinary occasions. Its use was condemned in later ages. In the sacrifices and religious ceremonies the intoxicating juice of a plant called *Soma* was freely drunk.[1] But those who indulged in drinks are often blamed in the hymns for doing this. "Anger, dice and sura," the Veda declares, "are said to cause men to sin."

Amusements. Gambling, war-dancing, chariot-racing and hunting formed the favourite pastimes of the people. Among other amusements mention may be made of boxing, dancing and music, accompanied by the lute, flute and drum. Women were expert in dancing and singing. They displayed their skill in dancing and music to the accompaniment of lutes and cymbals. There were three types of musical instruments—percussion, string and wind. The singers of the Rigvedic Age took delight in dwelling on the joys of life and they rarely referred to death except in the case of enemies. They loved life and knew that the only way to enjoy life was to be fearless and not worry about defeat or disaster.

Morals. The morals of the people were very pure. Robbery and other crimes were very rare as people lived a contented life. Hospitality was enjoined upon all. Great respect and affection was shown to guests. To speak the truth was considered a religious duty. Seduction and adultery were regarded as sins.

The Society. The Aryans were undoubtedly a pastoral and agricultural people when they entered India. Gradually they settled in society. The Vedic *Kulas* or families were grouped into larger units in the formation of which *Varna* (colour) and

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1 The IX *Mandal* of Rigveda is devoted to the praise of *Soma*.

Sajatya (kinship) played an important part. From the very beginning in the society the fair-skinned Aryan invaders were marked out from their dark-skinned rivals who were termed *dasa*, *dasyu* or *sudra*. In the Aryan society itself men of kingly family (*rajanya* or *kshatra*) and the descendants of priests (*Brahmanas*) were clearly distinguished from the common free men, the *vis*.[1] The four divisions of society—the *Brahmana*, the *Rajanya*, the *Vaisya* and the *Sudras*—are mentioned in some of the earlier hymns and later on in the *Purusha sukta*[2] it is formally and clearly expressed. But in the hymns of the Rigveda there is little trace of the rigid restrictions typical of caste in its mature form. There was hardly any taboo on inter-marriage, change of occupation or commensality. There are examples of marriages of *Brahmanas* with *Rajanya* women and of the union of *Arya* and *Sudra*. Families were not wedded to a particular profession. People could change their occupations according to their needs or talents. There was no restriction on the taking of food cooked by the *Sudras*. People dined freely with each other. There is no evidence to convince us that impurity was communicated by the touch or contact of the inferior castes as is the case to-day.

Economic Life

The Village. The Aryans of the Rigvedic Age were pre-eminently a rural people. They lived mostly in scattered villages as is evident from the absence of the word *nagara* (city) in the hymns of the Rigveda. But *purs* are mentioned there. They were sometimes of considerable size and were made of stones (*asmamyi*) or of iron (*ayasi*). It seems that the *purs* were rather earth-work fortifications or forests and served as places of refuge. They might have been part of the village or just outside it. The Rigveda makes no clear mention of individual cities like *Asandivat* or *Kampila* or Kasi. The Aryan village

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1 *An Advanced History of India* by Dr. R.C. Majumdar, p. 32.

2 "ब्राह्मणोऽस्य मुख मासीद बाहू राजन्यः कृतः ।
ऊरु तदस्य यद्वैश्यः पद्भ्यां शूद्रोऽअजायत ॥" (*Rigveda* X, 90, 12)
The Purusha Sukta or Creation Hymn in the X Mandal of the Rigveda says that Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras have originated respectively from the mouth, arms, thighs and feet of the Purusha or the Creator.

was a group of houses, constructed near each other for protection. It was surrounded by some kind of hedge or a wall as a protective barrier against enemies and wild beasts. The village was often built on a higher track of land to prevent inundation by rivers. The houses in the village were constructed of wood with mud walls. They had thatched roofs and clay floor Gramani was the chief officer who looked after the affairs of the village, both civil and military. There was another officer known as *Vrajapati*. He led the various *Kulapas* or heads of the families to battle. Grasslands or grazing grounds were outside the village and were held in common, while homesteads and arable lands seem to have been owned by individuals or families.

Agriculture. Reference in the Rigveda shows that agriculture was the main industry of the Aryans. It was the principal occupation of the village folk. They ploughed the fields by means of a pair of oxen bound to the yoke. There were heavy ploughs which required twenty-four oxen to draw them. Cultivated fields were known as *Urvara* or *Kshetra*. Water was led into them by means of irrigation canals. They knew the use of manure. There are copious hymns devoted to ploughing, in which the Vedic Aryans invoked the blessings of their gods for plenty of crops, rains and the welfare of their cattle. Barley and wheat were the principal produce of the field, but oil seeds and cotton were also cultivated. Rice was, perhaps, not extensively grown. The rearing of cattle and other domestic animals was not less important than agriculture. Cattle-breeding was an important means of living. Cows were held in great respect. The wealth and prosperity of the Aryans depended upon the possession of a large number of cows. Herds of cattle were daily led to the pasture by the *gopa* (cowherd). Among other domesticated animals were the draught-ox, the horse, the dog, the goat, the ass and the sheep. The ewes of the land of Gandhara were famous for their wool. A primitive kind of irrigation came early into use.

Trade and Industry. The Vedic Aryans were not indifferent to trade and industry. Besides trade with foreign countries or alien tribes, there must have been brisk inland trade. Commerce was largely controlled by a people called *Pani*. They were

probably non-Aryans and famous for their niggardliness. Trade probably was carried on by barter. The standard unit of value was the cow, but necklets of gold (*nishka*) was also used as a means of exchange. Whether *nishkas* in the early period possessed all the characteristics of a regular coinage is a controversial question. No gold coin of old indigenous type has been yet discovered in India. But it seems certain that the transition to the use of coined money was clearly prepared by the *nishka*, which came to have a definite weight, though not the hall-mark of state treasury. There is also in the *Rigveda*, in an enumeration of gifts, reference to the golden *mana* which was probably a kind of weight-unit.[1]

The simple arts of a civilized life were practised by the Aryans of the Rigveda. We read of weavers of wool and cotton together with the workers in the subsidiary industries of dyeing and embroidery. Wood-worker, the metal-worker, the tanner, and the potter may also be mentioned in this list. The wood-worker not only made chariots, wagons, house and boats but carved work of finer type such as artistic cups. The metal worker designed all types of weapons, implements and ornaments from various types of metals including gold and the mysterious *ayas*. What metal the ayas was is uncertain. Some scholars identify *ayas* with copper or bronze while others favour the sense of iron. The art of tanning and the use of hide was well-known. The tanner made water-casks, thongs, bow-strings, reins and hand-guards for the protection of the archers. Spinning and weaving was done by both men as well as women. The latter displayed their skill in sewing and the plaiting of mats from grass and reeds. The potter also served the people by his art. Those who practised these professions were not looked upon as inferiors.

Means of Transport and Communication. The chief means of transport by land were chariots (*ratha*) and wagons, the former generally drawn by horses and the latter by oxen. Riding on horseback was also in vogue. Roads were haunted by highwaymen (*taskara*, *stena*) and forests infested by wild animals.

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1 *An Advanced History of India*, p. 35 and *The History and Culture of the Indian People in Vedic Age*, Chapter XIX.

But travelling was fairly common. Whether marine navigation was practised in the Rigvedic Age is a highly debatable question. According to one view, navigation was limited to crossing of rivers in boats which laden with merchandise plied the rivers. But there are references to navigators sailing in ships with a hundred oars. The story of the ship-wreck of *Bhujyu*, rescued by Asvins in the ocean, the mention of the word *Samudra*, and the men going to the ocean for gain, in the Rigved clearly indicate that the Aryans carried on the sea trade in this age. Again, the identification of the Vedic *mana*, a weighing unit, with the Babylonian weighing unit *manah*, make us conclude that there was 'a very early intercourse between Vedic Indian and distant lands beyond seas.'

Arts and Sciences. The splendid collection of lyrics known as the *Rick-Samhita*, consisting of 1017 hymns in praise of different gods, bears testimony to the full blooming art of poetry in the Rigvedic age. "Fine specimens of lyric poetry are also to be found among the Rigvedic hymns, notably in those addressed to the goddess of the dawn."

As regards the art of writing, the prevailing view is that the Rigvedic people did not enjoy the art of writing. This art was undoubtedly practised by the people of the pre-historic Indus Valley Civilisation. But it is noteworthy that the early literature of the Aryans was transmitted orally.

The Aryans knew well the art of architecture and sculpture. We have references to mansions supported by a thousand columns and provided with a thousand doors. There were stone castles and structures with a hundred walls. This is enough to indicate that architecture made some progress in the Rigvedic India. Allusions to images of Indra point, according to some scholars, the beginning of sculpture.

The science of medicine had also made some advance. It had distinguished a large number of diseases. "But the physician (*bhishak*) was still a fiend-slayer and a healer of diseases." Herbs, plants and drugs were discovered by the physicians of the age to cure various diseases. But people practised charms and spells also. They considered them as efficacious as the herbs or drugs. Prayers for long life were frequently offered. The story that when the leg of *Vispata* was cut off in a battle

it was replaced with an iron one indicates some progress in surgery. Some definite progress was made in astronomy and certain stars had already been observed and named.

Religion. Like several other aspects of their daily life, the religion of the early Aryans was also plain and simple. They worshipped various powers and manifestations of nature, such as the Sun, the Moon, the Sky, the dawn, Thunder, Wind and the Air. Wherever the Aryans perceived lively power, they created a deity. At their earliest stage the gods therefore represented the powers of nature. "Gradually, they came to be divorced from the objects which they had originally represented and ultimately came to be worshipped themselves. But their true nature was never forgotten and it is mostly possible for us to detect the natural phenomenon which each god had behind him." The gods of the Rigvedic period numbered thirty-three. We now deal with the nature of some of the deities in the following pages.

Father *Dyaus* (Sky), the Shining God of Heaven and Mother *Prithvi*, the Earth Goddess, were among the oldest of the Vedic deities. They were later on thrown in the background by *Varuna*, the God of the Sky and *Indra*, the God of Thunder and Rain. *Varuna* was the most sublime deity of the early Vedic pantheon. He was regarded as being incharge of the right, truth and moral order (*rita*). He stood out pre-eminently as the moral governor among all the deities. He was supposed to enjoy the overlordship of the Cosmic Waters. He was conceived as the omniscient ruler of the universe, no sinner could escape his vigilant eye. To him people turned for forgiveness of sin just as they did to Vishnu in later age. *Indra*, the most popular of the gods, was given the largest number of hymns—about one-fourth of the total number of hymns in the *Rig-Veda Samhita*. He occupied the chief place among the Vedic gods. His physical powers and proportions were supposed to be stupendous, almost cosmic. "Frequently we find him fighting with the atmospheric demons (called *Vritra*) who were supposed to have stolen the rain water. Indra chased them, smote them with his thunderbolt and released the water, which then fell in streams on the lands of his worshippers." He

was supposed to cause the rain to fall and relieve the dryness of the earth.

Besides *Varuna* and *Indra*, there were the *Maruts* (Storm Gods), *Vayu* and *Vata* (the Wind Gods), *Rudra* (the Howling God of Storm and Lightning), and *Parjanya* (the God of Rain). The *Marutas* helped Indra in scattering away the damons. Then, there was another god Rudra. He was the god of thunder and storm. He was regarded as a fierce, terribly bright and irascible personage. He took offence at the slightest defect in his worship.

Agni, a personification of the sacrificial fire, was second in importance only to Indra. He was regarded as a priest and a messenger in as much as he conveyed to the gods the oblations offered by the devotees. He received special homage by the people as no sacrifice could be performed without offerings to him. Next in importance to *Agni* comes *Soma*, because the Soma sacrifice was the centre of the ritual of the Vedic religion. Soma in fact was the juice of a plant growing upon the mountain-sides and from it was prepared, accompanied by elaborate ritual, an intoxicating drink, which was consumed sacramentally and offered to the gods. It was supposed to be a divine drink conferring immortality on gods and men. Its exhilarating effects were supposed to exalt the participator to the gates of heaven. Soma was mystically identified with the moon, who controls vegetation and whose cup is for ever filling and emptying as he waxes and wanes. *Sarasvati* was the river deity who came to be regarded later as the Goddess of Learning.

The Sun-god was worshipped in the various forms, *Mitra* (the personification of the Sun's beneficient agency), *Surya* (the illuminator), *Savitri* (the Enlivener), *Pushan* (the Nourisher), *Vishnu Vrukrama* (the wide-striding Sun), *Savita*, the *Asvins* (perhaps the Morning and Evening Stars, later the gods of healing), and *Usha*, the lovely Goddess of the Dawn. 'The Sun-god dispels the dark demons who occupy the earth in the night and drives his victorious chariot through the sky in the day time.'

'Abstract deities like *Dhatri*, the Establisher, *Vidhatri*, the Ordainer ; *Visvakarman*, the All-creating, *Prajapati*, the Lord of

Creatures ; *Sraddha,* Faith and *Manyu,* Wrath, make their appearance at a later stage.'

Significant Aspects of the Rigvedic Mythology[1]

Some important aspects of the Rigvedic mythology were as follows :—

1. Most of the objects of devotion are the personifications of the principal phenomena of Nature.

2. Totemism in the sense of the actual direct worship of animals or the belief in an animal ancestor did not exist.

3. There was no hierarchy among the gods.

4. The essential nature of the Vedic gods was benevolence. They were invoked for receiving favours. Power was only an inevitable attribute of a protecting agency and was not the chief feature of the gods. The Vedic Aryans were not afraid of the gods ; they were the friends of men. And so, besides the worship of the gods by prayers, the Aryans propitiated them with offerings of ghee, milk, grain, flesh and *Soma* juice. The process of offerings to gods was simple and plain. It, consisting of the throwing of oblations into the sacrificial fire, accompanied with the recitation of the Rigvedic hymns. Thus sacrifices occupy a prominent place in the Vedic ritual. But sacrifices were not an end in themselves ; they were simply the means to please the gods—a means of influencing the gods in favour of the offerer. No mystic significance was attached to them. They were not meant to bestow any boon on the offerer or sacrificer by their own virtue. There were two types of sacrifices—(1) Sacrifices of the simplest type (offerings of milk, grain, ghee or flesh thrown into the fire by the householder himself). Every one rich or poor could perform them according to his means ; (2) Grand sacrifices ; they were undertaken by aristocratic and wealthy men and kings. Such sacrifices required a large number of priests and an extensive sacrificial area.

5. There was no priestly class. Every householder was himself a priest. He lighted the sacrificial fire in his own home and chanted the hymns.

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1 *Vedic Mythology* by A.A. Macdonell ; *A Second Selection of Hymns from the Rigveda* by Zimmerman ; *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. I, edited by Dr. R.C. Majumdar, Chapter XVIII.

6. There was the predominance of the male element in the mythology. Goddesses like *Prithvi*, *Aditi*, *Usha* and *Sarswati* occupied a very subordinate status. In the Indus Valley mythology, the mother goddess is co-equal with her male partner.

7. There was a tendency in a few hymns of the Rigveda to identify one god with others or to group them in pairs (*e.g.*, *dyava-prithvi*).[1]

8. There were neither temples, nor altars, neither images nor hereditary priests.

9. The Rigvedic gods were fondly conceived of in a human form. But they were not anthropomorphically represented in images. It was said of one of them, "his sound is heard, but his form is unseen".

10. The Rigvedic religion was Heno-theism or Katheno-theism—a belief in single gods, each in turn standing out as the highest god, the creator and sustainer of the universe, the best giver of happiness to man, the protector of man from evils and the enricher of man. This was also styled polytheism.

Philosophy of the Rigvedic Age

Hymns of the Rigveda reveal certain philosophy of the Aryans. They did not conceive the ideal of asceticism or self-mortification as yet. Men did not retire into forests and subject themselves to penances in order to meditate on religion. The world was not considered as an evil, a place of misery by the Rigvedic rishis. There was no eagerness to get rid of the body and to escape from the shackles of this world. But it does not mean that they fought shy of this world. To them this world was a good world. They wanted to enjoy life in this world to the full. The Regvedic rishis conceived this world as a fit place for virtuous men to lead a good life under the protection of beneficent gods. This world formed the true stepping-stone to a higher life in other regions. There was no tinge of pessimism in the Rigvedic religion or philosophy. They did not believe that life is a misery which can be ended by eradicating desire or *Vasana*. There was little mention of evil and the fate of evil men. The emphasis was on the glory that awaited the virtuous man after death. There is the mention of the heaven and the

History of Ancient India by Dr. R.S. Tripathi, p. 37.

still higher abodes but no words about hell. The heaven was to be reached through sacrifices and worship of gods. To the Rigvedic sages the world was a rung in the ladder of the true progression of man's soul along his spiritual path. There was no conflict between man's future and his present, no conflict between *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*. Man's life was conceived of as a harmonious unit. The theory of reincarnation or rebirth was not completely formed. The Rigvedic hymns had no consistent theory regarding the life after death. At death the body was carried to the funeral pyre. It was accompanied by the wife and relatives of the dead. If he were a Brahmin, his staff was laid in the right hand of the corpse ; if he were a Kshatriya his bow was ; if he were a Vaisya his goad was. His wife sat beside him, until she was called away with the words "Rise up, O Woman, into the world of the living." The pyre then was kindled with fire from the family hearth and the hymn for the dead, "Go forth, go forth, upon the path of the old" (*Rigveda*, X, 14) was chanted. When the flames completely consumed the body, the bones were collected, washed and buried in an urn.[1] The Rigvedic ideas of life after death were very vague. The soul departed to the "Land of fathers", *Pitriloka*, where it was received by Yama, king of dead and rewarded or punished according to its deeds (*Rigveda*, IX Mandal, 113; X, 15, 16, 58). So we may conclude that only the germs of the conception of rebirth were there. The later doctrine of the transmigration of soul was not yet developed.

In course of time the views of the Aryans about nature and divinity changed. In the later hymns of the Rigveda we find unmistakable indications of the tendency towards monotheism and even monism. The hymn in the Rigveda (X Mandal, 72, 2) reveals to one that the "existent" was produced from the "non-existent", the manifest arose from out of the non-manifest. The fact is that the Rigvedic Aryan worshippers appreciated the glorious phenomena of nature and they soon rose from these phenomena to grasp the mysteries of creation and its creator. They soon realised the noble truth that God exists and that he is the creator of all creation in the Universe. The hymns of the

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1 *India, A Short Cultural History* by H. G. Rawlinson, p. 32.

Rigveda, Mandal X, 82 give us a glimpse of the sublime conception of the supreme Deity. These hymns foreshadow the idea of universal unity and express the belief that God is one although He bears many names. "The gods are one and the same, only the sages describe them differently."[1] Thus the idea of a single supreme power governing and controlling the Universe seems finally to have emerged and to have superseded the earlier conception of a number of deities coordinating in their work of controlling the great cosmic phenomena.

General Conclusions

Shri K. M. Panikkar in his book *A Survey of Indian History* argues that certain social and political conceptions were gradually evolved during the Rigvedic Age. They were as follows —

The evolution of the Theory of Paramountcy. The Aryans of the Rigvedic time were confined to the Punjab and the frontier region. Though the Jamuna and the Ganga are sometimes stated in the Rigveda, the geographical expansion of the Aryans did not extend further east. Since there was no continuous migration of the Aryans like the Muslims in the medieval ages, the theory that the rest of India came gradually to be peopled by the Aryans cannot be maintained. The Aryans gradually mixed up with the non-Aryans and then expanded eastward. When the Aryans had settled in the Punjab, they had fought under their chief against the Dasyus—the non-Aryans. When the Aryans had developed territorial authority the Aryan chiefs became kings of the regions. When the Aryans' settlements expanded to the Indo-Gangetic plain in the east, a new monarchy of the Bharats came into power. As the kingdom of the Bharats contained a much large percentage of the non-Aryans or the indigenous people, the new monarchy was organised on a different basis. It had little common in the chiefships of the Aryan settlements of the Punjab. A struggle for sovereign powers between the two political systems—the

इन्द्रं मित्रं वरुणमग्निमाहुरथो दिव्यः स सुपर्णो गरुत्मान् ।
एकं सद्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्त्यग्नि यमं मातरिश्वान माहुः ॥
(*Rigveda*, I, 164, 46)

Aryans and the non-Aryans was, therefore, inevitable. Thus the great battle of the Ten Kings was fought. It is described in the Rigveda—it is the first recorded event of importance in Indian history. The Bharat-king Sudas of the Indo-Gangetic plain faced in battle the ten allied kings of the earlier Aryan settlements. This indicates that the battle of the Ten Kings was not a battle solely of the Aryan peoples. Non-Aryans under their own chiefs were ranged on both sides. The results of the Sudas' victory in this battle were profound and far-reaching. In the first place Sudas by this achievement became the paramount king—instead of annexing the conquered territories he exercised his sovereignty over them. The conception of the victorious king becoming an overlord and exercising paramountcy over subordinate kings rather than annexing the states to form an extensive kingdom was the outcome of Sudas' victory. Rulers who annexed the enemy's territories were regarded to have gone against Dharma. The normal process was for the rulers who were defeated to pay homage and recognise the sovereignty of the overlord. The *digvijayas* of later times that left the local rulers undisturbed was logical theory of the paramount king—the *Samrat*. This later on became permanent feature of the Hindu political system.

The origin and early evolution of the Hindu Civilisation bearing traces of the Pre-Aryan Culture. The battle of the Ten Kings also witnessed the end of the "Pure Aryans". The earlier settlements in the Punjab were predominantly Aryan. But the new state of Sudas to the east of the Jamuna was a composite kingdom where the Aryan population, though exercising dominant influence, was numerically smaller. The victory of Sudas was the triumph of a coalition of Aryans and the indigenous non-Aryan people. The Yakshas and other tribes, that were fighting on the side of Sudas under their own king Bheda, were non-Aryans. "This victory, therefore, established the political assimilation of Aryans and the non-Aryans in the new Aryan colonies of the Gangetic plains."

The logical outcome of this political assimilation of the Aryans and the non-Aryans was the evolution of a civilisation known as Aryan, but predominantly that of the conquered indi-

genous people. The synthesis of the Aryan and pre-Aryan people resulted in the Hindu civilisation bearing the traces of the rich pre-Aryan civilisation and culture. The first clearest evidence of this is afforded by the Aryan attitude towards the *Lingam* and the God whom it symbolises. In Rigveda, VII, 21, 5, a significant statement is recorded, "Let those whose deity is Phallus not penetrate our sanctuary." This fear of the Phallic worshippers of the pre-Aryan civilisation is replaced later on in the Veda by its recognition in the official ritual, the *Lingam* finding its place even in the Aswamedha. Shiva Pashupati also assumes greater significance in the later Vedas and from the period of the Yajurveda Shiva assumes the aspect of a greater deity.

The second clearest evidence is the gradual disappearance of the Aryan gods in the later Vedic civilisation. *Varuna*, to whom a large number of hymns had been addressed, disappears altogether from the pantheon and becomes a mere dikpala. *Vayu* is also reduced to the backward position, while *Indra*, the mighty destroyer of cities and the chief eater of sacrifices in the early Vedic period, is merely a super-king of the lower heavens where he holds luxurious court and is depicted as a debonair debauchee. The Vedic gods died soon after the Aryans conquered the Dasyus or non-Aryans, and were reborn as minor sacrifices were performed later on to gods who had ceased to be potent; the same *mantras* were repeated and enchanted but to gods who were no longer worshipped. It is probable that the script which the Indo-Aryans evolved was also based on the script of the Indus Valley. Obviously the pastoral Aryans who slowly conquered the local population assimilated their culture and civilisation. Consequently Hinduism, as it is to-day, was the outcome of this assimilation. Therefore, the theory of Aryan origin of Hindu civilisation is to be greatly modified.

The third evidence to show the traces of the Pre-Aryan culture is that the rishis of the Upanishads in the post-Vedic period were no longer concerned with the Vedic gods. In the later Vedic literature allusions to the mother goddess also occur indicating the influence of the non-Aryan religion. Many of the rishis are alluded to by their mother's name. As the Aryan

society was patriarchal, this system of identification perhaps indicates the influence of a matriarchal system of the indigenous people. Thus the system which had been evolved as a result of the contact between the Aryans and the non-Aryans was a synthesis in which while the forms of Aryan conquerors predominated, the thought and tradition of the conquered non-Aryans found new expression.

Again, in the Rigveda the gradual transformation of the Aryans from a pastoral to an agricultural state of society brings the village into prominence. It is more probable that the self-contained village is merely a continuation of the organisation of the earlier peoples, rather than the outcome of the Rig-Vedic Aryan System. Cities like Mohenjodaro could only have flourished on an elaborate system of agriculture and a rural economy based on villages. It is, therefore, more reasonable to assume that when the Aryans became an agricultural people they took over the village organisation as they found it existing in the indigenous system. Even to-day village continues to be the unchanging backbone of Indian economic and social life.

The Aryan Doctrine of Racialism and Colour Distinction. Aryans introduced into India the ideas of racialism and colour bar. Their sense of being fair-complexioned in contrast to the indigenous or non-Aryan people who were dark-skinned, dominated their whole thought and all actions. To this was added their two strong convictions—(1) that God had revealed Himself to them through the Vedas and (2) that their power which enabled them to conquer and subdue the *Dasyus* was derived from their mystical rites and magical practices. They had to keep them inviolably secret. The sense of colour coupled with their sacred knowledge led to the perpetuation of distinction between the Aryans and the non-Aryans or between the twice-born and the one-born. The twice-born or the *dvijas* were the people who after performing certain mystical rituals were entitled to receive the sacred knowledge and participate in the Aryan worship and sacrifices. This was the starting point of the caste-system which was elaborated and developed later on in the form of *Chaturvarnya* system by the Dharma Sastra writers.

But it should be noted that this colour and racial distinction, theory of relegating the dark-skinned to an inferior position, was never wholly effective. There is ample evidence to show that the races mixed together and the Aryans accepted the dark-skinned even among their rishis. Badarayana Veda Vyas, who edited the Vedas and arranged them, was the dark-skinned son of a fisherwoman—the illegitimate progeny of an Aryan saint and was called as Badarayana the Black. The doctrine that the non-Aryans or the *non-Dvijas* were inferior affected in no way the position of the indigenous rulers whose support King Sudas had to seek. We have many references to the matrimonial alliances of kings and even priests with the indigenous population. This establishes the fact that before the caste-system took shape much inter-mixture of the Aryan and non-Aryan blood had already taken place. "Though racialism remained in the form of the doctrine of the Aryans, the initiation into the secrets and mysteries of the Vedic Mantras, became the test of the *dvija* and the non-dvija and in course of time the conception of Aryanhood became one of status and culture rather than a *varna* or colour."

Chapter 4

Later Vedic Age and Epic Periods

THE period following that of the Rigveda is known as the Later Vedic Age. It was in this age that the three later *Veda-Samhitas*, namely the *Sam Veda Samhita*, the *Yajurveda Samhita*, the *Atharvaveda Samhita* as well as the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads* of all the four Vedas and later on the two great epics—the Ramayan and the Mahabharat—were composed. The composition of the *Brahmanas* of the *Rigveda Samhita* was about the same time as the *Samhitas* of the three other Vedas were composed. Not much time elapsed between the composition of the later Vedic *Samhita* and their *Brahmanas*. This later Vedic literature together with the epics enables us to form some idea of the development that took place in that age.

The Aryan Expansion.[1] In the Rigvedic Age, the Aryan tribes had spread over the regions from Kabul to the Upper Ganges and had built up small kingdoms mostly under hereditary kings. As a result of the internecine strife in which some of the weaker tribes were engaged in the Rigvedic times, a few of the weaker tribes were absorbed by their more powerful neighbours. Consequently the wealth and the territory of the conquering tribes increased. Stately cities and extensive compact kingdoms came into existence. They are mentioned for the first time in the later Vedic texts.

With the growth of the extensive kingdoms and large cities, the political and cultural sway of the Aryans further extended

The Aryanisation of India by N.K. Dutt.

towards the east and the south. By the end of the Vedic period the Aryans had thoroughly conquered and subdued the fertile plains of northern India watered by the Jamuna, the Upper Ganges and the *Sadanira* (the *Rapti* or the Gandak.) Later on some adventurous enterprising groups of the Aryan people penetrated into the Vindhya forest and went into the Deccan. There they established powerful kingdoms.

Simultaneously with the Aryan expansion and colonisation, the West Punjab gradually got out of the Aryan ken and the centre of the Aryan World shifted from the Punjab to the land between the *Saraswati* and the *Ganges*. This region was known as the "Firm Middle Country" (*Dhruva Madhyamadis*). It was occupied by the Kurus, the Panchals and some adjoining tribes. It was from this region that Brahmanical civilisation spread to east and south-east. It was extended to the land of the Kosalas and the Kasis, modern Oudh and eastern U.P. It was further carried to the swamps of east of the river Gandak and to the Valley of the Wardha (Western Bihar and Madhya Pradesh of the present time). Beyond these regions lived the non-Aryan tribes of mixed origin. They were the Angas of East Bihar, the Magadhas of South Bihar, in addition to the Dasyus or aboriginal people known as the *Pundras* of the North Bengal, the *Pulindas* and *Savaras* of the Vindhya forest and the *Andhras* of the Godavari valley.

Many of the famous tribes of the Rigvedic age had passed into oblivion and new ones had taken their place. Thus the Bharats, the Purus and the Tritsus were superseded by the Kurus, the Panchals and the Kasis. Though their names do not occur in the Rigvedic hymns, but in the later Vedic Age they played an important part in the political life of the country. It seems that the Purus and Bharats who were enemies at the time of the battle of the Ten Kings were now amalgamated under the new name Kurus. They occupied Kurukshetra as well as the districts of Delhi and Meerut. Their capital was Asandivat. They were considered the most cultured of the Aryans. They were the best masters of rituals and could perform sacrifices without fault. The later Vedic texts describe powerful Kuru kings like Balhika-Pratipiya, Parikshit and

Janamejaya. Closely allied to them was another distinguished tribe—the Panchals with Kampila as their capital. They occupied the northern portion of the Ganges-Jamuna Doab and held an equally important position in popular estimation. The Panchals also produced conquering kings. For a long time they were engaged in wars and alliances with the Kurus. But they were famous chiefly because their land was the house of theologians and philosophers like King Pravahana and Jaivali, and the sages like Aruni and Svetaketu.

Later on, in the time of the Upanishads, the reputation of the land of the Panchals as a centre of Brahmanical learning dwindled. Soon it was eclipsed by the fair name and fame of the land of the Videhas or modern north Bihar. Their king Janaka won the proud title of *Samrat*. He gathered the celebrities of the Kuru-Panchala lands in his court. To the west of the Videhas was the kingdom of the Kosalas in the country now called Oudh. Near modern Banaras, the Kasis established their power. Further east, that is beyond Bihar, as noted above, lived the Magadhas and the Angas who were yet outside the pale of the Aryan civilisation. In two passages of the *Aitareya Brahmana* mention is made of Vidarbhas of Bihar. A few other tribes like the Matsyas, the Sur-Senas and the Gandharas were also existing having governments of their own. Thus, nearly the whole of Northern India, from the Himalayas to the Vindhyas and perhaps even beyond, had now come within the ken of the Aryans. However, in the *Satpatha Brahmana* frequent allusions to the aggressive and ambitious wars, waged between the neighbouring Aryan rulers as also between the Aryans and the non-Aryan states, explain the consequent rise and fall of these states.

Growth of the Royal Power. The amalgamation of tribes, the acquisition of new territories and the subsequent swelling of the kingdoms in size, and the successful leadership of the kings in war inevitably led to a growth in the royal power and prerogatives. "Without a king, the position of men would be like that of a herd of cattle without a herdman" was the principle accepted. Kings claimed absolute royal power over their subjects. Even the Brahmans were "liable to

removal at will." Tributes such as *bali*, *sulka* and *bhaga* were paid to the king by common men. They could be "oppressed at will", while the members of the servile classes or lower groups were liable to be "expelled and slain at will." Elaborate consecration ceremoney with sacrifices and prayers was performed to raise the king to a higher status than ordinary humanity. Though there was no divine right of kings, but divine virtues were attributed to him.

The ideal of paramountcy or universal sovereignty began to loom large on the political horizon. Successful and powerful kings began to claim the rank of universal king (*raja visvajanina*), lord of all the earth (*sarvabhumi*) or sole ruler (*ekarat*) of the land down to the seas. To symbolise their success over other rulers they celebrated sacrifices befitting their status like the *Rajasuya* (royal consecration), the *Vajapeya* (drink of strength), and *Asvamedha* (horse-sacrifice). These sacrifices demonstrated the degree of power and prestige attained by the ambitious kings. Frequent references to such terms as *Samrat*, *Bhoja*, *Virat*, *Adhiraja*, *Rajadhiraja* etc., for the title and designations of the king point to the growth of imperialism and feudal ideas. They also denote various gradations of suzerains.

The king had to perform mainly military and judicial functions. He was to protect his people, maintain the laws, and destroy the enemies of his subjects. He used to dispense with justice and punish the criminals. He wielded the rod of chastisement (*danda*). He was usually, though not invariably, a Kshatriya. Prevailing form of government was monarchy. It was even now hereditary. The coronation songs in the Atharvaveda prove that the people elected monarchs some time.

Theoretically the king was absolute, but in practice his absolute authority did not exist. His royal claim to absolutism did not pass unchallenged. At his coronation, he had to take an oath by which he promised to be loyal to religion, to protect the Brahmans and the laws of the realm. He said—

> "If I play thee false, may I lose the merit of all my religious performances and gifts, of my good deeds, my place, my life, and even my progeny !"

The king is thus addressed—

"To thee this state is given for agriculture, progress and for the common weal."

This indicates that the kingdom was regarded as a trust and not a possession, and the condition of holding it was the promotion of the common welfare and prosperity.

Sabha and Samiti. The popular assemblies—the *Sabha* and the *Samiti*—of the Rigvedic period continued and it is stated in the Atharvaveda[1] that concord between the king and the assembly was essential for the former's prosperity. The king sought their support, but the details are not clear. It appears that they deliberated upon matters of public importance such as war, peace, finance and sometimes they decided law-suits about land, debts, inheritance and criminal offences. Occasionally through *Samiti* popular wrath vented itself in the expulsion of absolute or tyrannical kings together with erring officials. There are references to *Samiti* sometimes electing or re-electing a king. In other words, the system of government and organisation in the later Vedic period was perhaps more "democratic" in the sense that the authority of the leaders of the Aryan tribes was still recognised by the king.

Elaboration of the Administrative Machinery

With the growth of the realm and the royal power came an elaboration of the machinery of the government. The king and his officials seem to have grown greatly in importance. The officers were collectively known as *Viras* or *Ratnins*. They included, according to Dr. R. C. Majumdar, "*Samgrahitri* (treasurer), the *Bhagadugha* (collector of taxes), the *Suta* (royal herald, bard or charioteer), the *Kshattri* (Chamberlain), the *Akshavapa* (Superintendent of gambling), the *Govikartana* (king's companion in the chase), the *Palagala* (courtier) in addition to the older ecclesiastical and military officials like the *Purohita* (Chaplain), the *Senani* (general) and the *Gramini* (Leader of the host or of the Village)." *Gramini* in the Rigvedic period was chiefly a military officer, but in the later Vedic

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1 The Atharvaveda (VII, 12) describes the Sabha and Samiti as the twin daughters of Prajapati.

सभा च मा समितिश्चावतां प्रजापतेर्दुहितरौ संविदाने ।

period he was both a military and civil official. He presided over the city or village where the court was held. The post of gramini was the summit of the ambition of the Vaisyas. In later years the *gramini* formed the channel through which the royal power was exercised in the village. (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, p. 131) *Gramini* and *Suta* were known as *raja-kartri* or 'king-maker'. It reveals their importance in the politics of the day. We have references to the generic title *Sachiva* which was applied to ministers in later ages. People contributed to the state taxes known as *bali* and *sulka* and they were collected by officers known as *Bhagadugha* and probably deposited with *Samgrahitri* (treasurer). This indicates significant development in the system of taxation and revenue administration.

References to the *Sthapati* and the *Satapati* point to a regular system of provincial government. The duty of the *Sthapati* was to administer outlying regions often inhabited by aboriginal tribes, while the *Satapati* probably 'looked after a group of a hundred villages and was the precursor of the long chain of rural officials mentioned in the law books.' According to the *Prasna Upanishad* the lowest official was the *Adhikrita*, the village officer. He was appointed by the king himself. As regards the police arrangements we know very little. However, we have a reference to police officials in the *Jivagribh* of the Rigveda and the *Ugras* of the Upanishads. The king's share in the administration of justice was greater. He upheld the law, *Dharma*, and punished the wicked. But sometimes he delegated his power to *Adhyakshas* or overseers. Occasionally certain cases were referred to the tribe for adjudication. A small body of *Sabhasads* or assessors used to conduct the judicial work of the tribal assembly, the *Gramyavadin* or village judge and his court *Sabha* used to decide petty cases in the village. Civil cases were sometimes decided by arbitration method. Private vengeance in criminal cases was recognised. Miscreants were punished with fines and trial by ordeal was sometimes resorted to.

Society

The later Vedic literatures reflect a complete change in the social life of the Aryans.

Dress, Diet and Amusements. Though little change can be traced in the mode of house-building and the style of dress, in dietary the eating of meat was disfavoured. Variety of eatables had increased. New forms of social entertainments had come into existence. Music, both vocal and instrumental, dancing, chariot-racing, horse-racing and gambling were the amusements of the Age. There are "references to the *Sailusha* (actor) and *gathas* or verses were sung by the lute-players (*vinagathin*) at great public festivals to the accompaniment of musical instruments which were sometimes furnished with a hundred strings (*satatantu*). Such *gathas* foreshadow the 'songs of victory' which developed into the Great Epic."[1] There were many lute-players, flute-players, conch-blowers, and drummers.

The position of the woman had deteriorated. She could not inherit property and her earnings belonged either to the husband or the father. The birth of a daughter was regarded as a source of misery and a son was an object of desire. Women were not allowed to go to the tribal assembly (*sabha*). They had no share in politics. Polygamy was practised and married women of the upper classes had often to suffer the presence of rival wives. The lot of queens was specially unenviable in this respect. The *mahishi* or the official or chief queen and the *vavata* or the favourite one, were loved and respected, others like the *parivrikti* were neglected. Conjugal morality stood on a high level. The women continued to participate in religious rites. Some of them received education of high order. It enabled them to participate prominently in philosophical deliberations at royal courts. The rules of marriage underwent a change towards greater rigidity. A marriage was banned within the circle of agnates and cognates. There were instances of child marriage and Sati.

The Social Doctrine of Varnashrama Dharma. It is a social concept which prescribes the suitable activities for different stages of life. According to it life is divided into four periods, namely *Brahamcharya* (the period of celibate education),

[1] *An Advanced History of India* by Dr. R. C. Mazumdar, H. C. Ray-Chaudhari and K. Dutta, p. 45.

Grihastha (the period of domestic life), *Vanaprastha* (the life of retirement into the solitude of forest for meditation and introspection), and the *Sanyas* (the life of renunciation and the ascetic search for divine life). The later Vedic Age was gradually organising this ideal for every householder to follow.

The Chaturvarnya or Caste System. The caste system developed during this period in many directions. Hereditary occupations, workers' guilds, *gotra*-traditions, the race-feeling between the Arya Varna (Vedic Aryans) and Dasyu Varna (aborigines) and the mixed marriages were the factors in caste elaboration in this age. The functions and duties, the privileges and status of the four castes were differentiated minutely in the religious and social spheres.

In the early Vedic times there seems to have been a threefold division of the society into Brahman (priest), Rajanya (nobility or the aristocratic section of the population), and Vis (the common folk). This division was more or less occupational and had no similarity with the caste system as it developed later on. In the Vedic Age there is no trace of the hereditary occupation and endogamy and the people were undivided one. But in the later Vedic Age this system was more developed. The doctrine of four castes—the *Brahmin*, whose duty was to learn and guide, the *Kshatriya*, the warrior, the protector and ruler, the *Vaisya*, engaged in economic pursuits, and the *Sudra*, the common man, the tiller and the cultivator—came into being.

The Brahmana in the later Vedic Age had attained to a position of superiority over others. He was expected to retain a fairly high standard of excellence and was to know the details of the rituals. Being in custody of the spiritual life of the people, he tried to retain his supreme position in society by giving an authoritative explanation of his divine origin and introducing Sastric injunctions to maintain his exclusiveness from the rest of the Aryans.

The *Kshatriyas* formed the governing and fighting class. They took a keen interest in the philosophy of the age. They occasionally quarelled with the Brahmans over the performance of sacrifices. By their superior learning some individual Kshatriyas occasionally raised themselves to the position of a Brahman.

They sought to attain the highest bliss by knowledge (*Jnana*). We have the recognised cases of Janaka and Vishwamitra, both kshatriya kings, one of whom became a royal teacher at whose feet even Brahmans sat and the other a rishi, and a composer of Vedic hymns. Many evidences are there to indicate a marked tendency towards the rivalry between the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas. The claim of the Brahman superiority was for long resisted by the Kshatriyas who declared that they had no superior and that the priest was only a follower of the king.

The *Vaisyas* were engaged in trade, industry and agriculture. They were distinguished from the two higher castes by their lack of priestly and noble blood and from the *Sudras* by their being free men. The Vaisyas were denied the privileges enjoyed by the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas. In one text, it is said that "he is to be tributary to another, to be lived upon by another and to be oppressed at will by another." But the richer or well-to-do people among the Vaisyas were called *Sreshthin* (the modern *Seth*) or *Grihapati* (house-holder). They were highly honoured in the royal court.

The *Sudras'* plight was miserable. They were menial and servile workers. The same text which defines the position of the Vaisya speaks thus of the Sudra, "He is to be the servant of another, to be expelled at will and to be slain at will." In matters of rituals the Sudra had no right. He was regarded as impure and was not allowed to touch the milk needed for oblations to the Fire-God. However, he was frequently grouped with the Vaisya and the two together were set against the priest and the noble. Gradually the position of the Sudras improved. They were no longer to be mere slaves, but became humbler freemen, because the gradual expansion of the Aryans in other parts of India made it impossible for the Aryan leaders to condemn millions of non-Aryans to slavery. Therefore the right of Sudra to live and prosper was gradually recognised by the leaders of the society and prayers were even uttered for his glory and comforts. The ranks of *Sudras* later on were constantly swollen by the admission of new aboriginal tribes into Aryan society.

There were outside the regular castes two important groups of people, the *Vratyas* and *Nishadas*. The *Vratyas* were, it seems,

outside the pale of Brahmanism. They were not following Brahmanism. They spoke some Prakrit language instead of sanskrit. They led a nomadic life. They seemed to have had some special association or relation with the non-Aryan people of Magadh. They probably followed the cult of Siva and of the 'Arhats'. Later on the Aryans allowed them to become members of the Brahmanical community provided they performed some prescribed rites. The Nishadas lived in their own villages. They had their own rulers (*Sthapati*). Probably they were identical with the *Bhils* of the present day. To sum up, the caste was becoming more rigid and owing to the stress of war, the growing needs of society and the consequent increase in trade and commerce, hereditary groups of artisans and traders were in the process of formation. The great community of ordinary freemen was splitting up into small functional groups and there are references, in addition to those engaged in agricultural and pastoral pursuits, to the merchant, the chariot-maker, the smith, the carpenter, the tanner, the fisher-man etc., as names of distinct castes. Some of them were sinking into social estimation and their touch was said to impart ceremonial impurity. Restrictions on inter-dining were known, but not on the basis of caste. This rigidity was not like that of the later times ; for we find a Brahman peer marrying the daughter of a Kshatriya. There were Brahmans of impure descent as Kavasha, Vatsa, etc.

Learning. Educationally, the Aryan Society had attained to the highest level of intellectual development in the later Vedic period. Learning became both religious and secular. Apart from the Vedas and the subsidiary texts, and Upanishads, grammar, prosody, logic and law were included in the courses of study. The Kshatriyas studied the art of war. The rules of studentship were clearly defined. The first rule was *upanayan* by which the Brahmachari was initated into a new life. He was to practise self-control and beg his bread to cultivate the spirit of humility. He was constantly to keep before himself the aims of learning—*Shraddha* (faith), *praja* (progeny), *dhana* (wealth), *ayu* (longevity), and *amritatya* (immortality). Vedic study, service to the teacher and chastity were the principal duties of a *Brahmachari*.

The hymns of the Vedas were still regarded as sacred and it was considered a sacrilege to put them to writing. The hymns composed by the ancestors were learnt by the priests by heart and the whole Vedic text was thus passed down hereditarily. Various devices were adopted to keep the text uncorrupted and one such notable attempt was in the *Padapath* of the *Rigvedic Samhita*, composed by Sakalya. It is a work in which each individual word of every hymn was put down separately to ensure the correctness of the text. Undoubtedly, with such advanced learning, some work on grammar also must have existed, but unfortunately all of them are now lost.[1] To sum up, education mostly consisted of home-teaching. The Brahman teachers taught students at their houses. They provided them free lodging and boarding. In return the students served their teachers and offered them fees (*guru-dakshina*).

Language. The language of the ordinary people must have been modified by their contact with the non-Aryans, and the result was the growth of the *Prakrit* (common) dialects. It was but natural for each locality to develop a *Prakrit* of its own. At the early stage were three such *Prakrits*, namely the *Sauraseni*, spoken in the surasena districts (the Central Doab), the *Magadhi* (in Magadha or East India) and the *Maharashtri*, possibly of the West. In course of time each of these developed branches of its own and was even used for literary purposes. Thus, from the Vedic language there were two independent developments namely *Sanskrit* whose form was fixed by Panini, the famous grammarian, and the *Prakrits*, which went on changing with the needs of the times. It is probable that Sanskrit must have been spoken by the cultured people and was the *lingua franca* of the scholars all over India.[2]

Medicine. The profession of the physician was well established.[3] A large number of diseases are mentioned in the Artharvaveda. They were treated with the herbs. The frequent killing of animals and offering their different limbs to

1 *History of India* by Dr. Iswari Prasad, p. 28.
2 *Ibid.*
3 See *Vajasaneyi Samhita* (XXX, 10) and *Taittiriya Brahmana* (III, 4-4-1).

the fire as oblation during the time of sacrifice must have, undoubtedly, acquainted the people with rudiments of anatomy. But medicine seems to have been still primitive and overshadowed by the concepts of magic and spells.

Astronomy. But there was a considerable advance in the knowledge of astronomy. "There was definite knowledge about the *tithis* or the phases of the moon and the ecliptic was divided into twenty-seven mansions each called a *Nakshatra.*"

Economic Conditions

Agriculture. Agriculture continued to be one of the principal occupations of the people. It was considerably improved and the varieties of crops raised were many including rice, barley, wheat, oils-seeds, etc. Considerable improvement was also affected in agricultural implements and sometimes as many as twenty-four bullocks were yoked to a plough.[1] Much land was brought under cultivation. The fertile plains, cultivated by the people, yielded two harvests a year. But the cultivator was not free from trouble. His cultivation generally suffered from moles and other creatures. There is a reference in an Upanishad passage about hail-storm or a swarm of locusts that sadly afflicted the land of the Kurus and compelled many people to migrate. Though the people, including even men of wealth, still lived in villages, yet the amenities of city life were no longer unknown. We find in certain villages that the peasant proprietors, working in their own fields, were being replaced by a class of landlords who secured possession of entire villages. Transfer of land, however, did not meet with popular approval during this age and allotments could only be made with the consent of clansmen.

Trade and Industry. Industries had increased by leaps and bounds and were greatly specialised. The variety of industrial occupations was remarkable. There are many references about hunters, fishermen, ploughmen, domestic servants, field-servants, cooks, basket-makers, rope-makers, fire-rangers, chariot-makers, bow-makers, carpenters, tanners, hide-dressers or furriers, washermen, dyers, weavers, barbers, potters, smiths, musicians,

[1] See *Kathaka Samhita*, the *Taittiriya* and the *Satapatha Brahmanas.*

merchants, money-lenders and others.[1] Women mostly participated in industrial pursuits as makers of embroidered garments, workers in thorns, dyers, makers of baskets, etc. A class of hereditary merchants (Vanija) came into being. The use of silver was increased and various types of ornaments were made of.

There was inland trade with the Kiratas inhabiting the mountains. They exchanged the drugs which they dug up on the high ridges for clothes, mattresses and skins. People were well-acquainted with the sea and the mention of the legend of the flood in the *Satapatha Brahmana* is considered by some scholars as an indication of intercourse with Babylon. Regular coinage had not yet started. Dr. R. C. Majumdar holds the opinion that commerce was facilitated by the use of convenient units of value like the *nishka*, the *satamana* and the *krishnala*. But it is doubtful if these had acquired all the characteristics of a regular coinage. The *nishka* which was previously a necklet, was now probably a lump of gold possessing a definite weight which was equal to three hundred and twenty *ratis* which also was the weight of a *satamana*. A *krishnala* weighed one *rati*, that is 1·8 grains. References to *ganas* or corporations and the *sreshthins* or eldermen indicate that merchants were probably organised into guilds.

Religious Development

Great significant changes took place in the religious life of the people during the later Vedic period. During this Age we discover three distinct currents of religious thoughts—the ritualistic, the philosophic and the ascetic.

Gods. The old gods, *Varuna*, *Indra*, *Surya* etc., were worshipped by the people with less zeal. New gods like Shiva, Rudra, Vishnu had arisen. Thus, the luster of the older Rigvedic gods was gradually growing dim, though here and there, especially in the Atharvaveda, we find magnificent hymns celebrating the omniscience of *Varuna* or the beneficence of the Earth-goddess. Common people began to express their favour for certain deities already known to the Rigveda, but not so prominent as Indra

See the list of victims at the Purush-medha in the *Vajasaneyi Samhita* (XXX) and the *Taittiriya Brahmana* (III, 4).

or Varuna. One of them was *Rudra*, who already bore the epithet of *Shiva* (propitious). He soon came to be regarded as the Great God (*Mahadeva*) and the lord of animate beings (*Pasupati*). His popularity was probably due to his identification with the chief male deity of the pre-historic people of the Indus-Valley civilisation and culture.

Side by side with Rudra rose god *Vishnu*. He was a solar deity and was well-known in the Rigveda. "As the source of cosmic and moral order, the deliverer of mankind in distress and the saviour of the Gods, Vishnu soon occupied the place of Varuna as the most sublime among the celestials, and his highest step (*parampadam*) became the goal of sages and peers. Before the final close of the Vedic canon, he came to be identified with *Vasudeva*—a hero or demi-god known to epic tradition as Krishna-Devakiputra."

Rituals and Sacrifices. Another change that took place during this period was the elaboration of the rites and ceremonies concerning the old vedic religion. In the Rigvedic days the ways of worship and the performance of yajnas were a simple affairs which every house-holder could do. Even on the occasion of public sacrifices, a tribal chief himself used to act as the high priest. In the later age, however, sacrifice became the all important thing in worship. The sacrifice dominated everything. Gods were subordinate to them. People believed that gods must submit to the sacrifice if properly performed. Hymns were considered as charms or spells to be used in sacrifices. They were no longer the outburst of a poetic wonder at some power of nature. Popular superstitious beliefs in spirits, imps, spells, charms, incantations, and witchcraft found a place in the sacred canon. The ceremonial side became more elaborate, complicated and expensive. The minutest details of the rituals were worked out and countless varieties of rituals were planned out, each to ensure some success or other. A regular science of sacrifice had now evolved. The belief that gods were propitiated by yajnas led to an increase in the number, variety and splendour of sacrifices which were prescribed for every householder. There were daily and periodical sacrifices. There are references to sacrifices lasting several years and requiring the

services of as many as seventeen priests, each with a definite business at different stages. In fact, the life of an Aryan was a series of sacrifices performed under the supervision of the Brahman priests. This firmly established the supremacy of the Brahmans.

The doctrine of the Supreme Brahman, Punarjanma, Karma and Moksha. While the right spirit of religion and simple worship of the Vedic Age had disappeared and the priests and the theologians were evolving elaborate sacrificial rites, there appeared another current of intellectual thought. Philosophers threw doubts on the efficacy of rituals and speculated about the underlying unity of the universe. The inquisitive mind entered deep into the problems of creation, life and death and came to the conclusion that there is one unchanging principle (*Brahman*) beyond the universe—the creator and controller of the whole order. It is the universal Soul or the Absolute "that dwelleth in everything that guideth all beings within, the Inward Guide, Immortal." After the death of a person his soul passes into another body and again into another and so on before it can be freed from all its imperfections and mingle in the Universal Soul. This is the doctrine of transmigration of souls. Allied with this was another doctrine of Karma. 'It lays down that no act or deed is lost and that all actions, good or bad, bear their proper fruits and help their authors up or down the scale of transmigration.' Souls have to be born again and again and reap the fruits of the actions (*Karma*) of their previous lives.

Closely connected with the doctrines of Karma and transmigration of soul is the doctrine of *Moksha*. It is a state of "birthlessness and deathlessness", a point of time in the journey of the soul when it is liberated from the cycle of births and deaths and becomes merged into the infinite Universal Soul of which it is but a small particle. A man was required to keep before his mind this ideal of Moksha and he was expected to strive for it throughout his life.

These doctrines and the philosophical speculations about the obstruse problems of God, Nature, Matter, Soul, Creation, Death, etc., are embodied in the Upanishads which were composed in this age offering the greatest contribution of India to

world philosophy. A more systematic and logical examination of these problems is again made in the works collectively known as the "six systems of philosophy"—the Sankhya, the Yoga, the Nyaya, the Vaisheshik, the Purvamimansa and the Uttar Mimansa. Thus religion became more philosophical. Serious minded persons began to ponder over the purpose of creation and the relation of the Individual to Brahma or the Universal Soul.

Ascetism. Another current of the religious thought before the final close of the Age was the ascetic ideal of life. Tapa (austerity) and Brahmacharya (celibacy) were emphasised much and asceticism was favoured considerably. An ascetic was a person who renounced worldly life and retired to the solitude of the forest to meditate on the spiritual side of life. Disregarding caste-system he believed in the transmigration of souls and the law of Karma. He subjected his body to severe austerities. His outlook of life was asceticism which was marked by self-mortification and was believed to be the means of purifying the soul, acquiring supernatural power and merging oneself into the Universal Soul. This ascetism was, however, widely advocated and extensively practised in the Epic Age.

The Age of the Sutras

The Sutra Literature. A special class of literature designated as the Sutra Literature gradually evolved after the Vedic Age. It consists of manuals of instructions on many subjects, written in short sentences running through a topic like a thread. The Aryans were eager to observe scrupulously the intricacies of the Vedic Literature in every small detail. But it was difficult for them to learn everything by heart. Moreover, they did not like the texts of the Vedic rituals to suffer any change in the course of oral instructions. Therefore, they developed a new prose style of writing treatises in the fewest possible words to ensure brevity and easy memorisation. It is known as the Sutra style. A Sutra was to be brief in form but unambiguous in its meaning (*Svalpaksharam-asandigdham...*).

The Sutra literature is not a part of the Vedic Literature but of the Vedangas (the limbs of the Veda) which are six in number—Shiksha (phonetics), kalpa (ritual), Vyakarna (gram-

mar), Nirukta (etymology), Chhandas (metrics), and Jotisha (astronomy). All these help in the study of the Vedic Literature. There were many Sutra texts dealing with each of these. But only *Kalpa-Sutras* have come down to us. The *Kalpa-Sutras* are divided into three classes—*Srauta-Sutras*, the *Grihya-Sutras* and the *Dharma-Sutras*. The *Srauta-Sutras* 'deal with the great Vedic sacrifices of Havis (oblation) and *Soma* and other religious matters'. The *Grihya-Sutras* deal with the domestic sacrifices and rituals or the performance of several ceremonies or sanskars from conception to cremation. The *Dharma-Sutras* deal with the social usages, customs and practices of every-day life, including religious, civil and criminal laws. Apart from the above-mentioned Kalpa Sutras there is a grammatical treatise, written in the Sutra style, called Panini's *Ashtadhyayi*. It does not form a part of the Vedanga literature.

The Age of the Sutra Literature. The Sutra literature is post-vedic or pre-Buddhistic. The general period of the Sutras extends from the sixth or seventh century before Christ to about the second century. (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, p. 227)

Culture in the Sutra Age[1]

These Sutras throw a flood of light on the life of the people living in the pre-Buddhist Age. It is briefly described as follows :

Social life. The *Varnasram-dharma* was firmly established in society. The caste-system was gradually hardening. Great emphasis was laid on the purity of the varnas or the social order. The status, occupations, obligations, duties and privileges of the four main castes (Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra) were clearly differentiated. The Brahmans had now become a well organised priestly class with special duties and privileges. In power and prestige the Kshatriyas were closest to the Brahmans. The social status of the Vaisyas had gradually deteriorated and a wide gulf separated the Sudras from these

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[1] For more details refer to *The History and Culture of the Indian People in the Vedic Age*, Chapters XXV to XXVII ; *The Hindu Civilisation* by R. K. Mookarji, pp. 120-140 ; and *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, Chapters IX and X, pp. 220-250.

three higher classes. The privilege of performing sanctifying sacraments was denied to Sudras. But they were employed as servants for various kinds of household work including that of the kitchen. On the whole the status of the Sudra was not very degraded. There were untouchables or Chandals who were considered as out-castes. Great stress was laid on purity. The idea of impurity communicated by the touch or contact of impure inferior castes was duly formed. Eating of defiled food was avoided. However, the caste rigidity was not so acute as it is now. Inter-dining and inter-marriages were permitted and Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas were allowed to marry women of lower castes. But the children of such marriages occupied inferior position so far inheritance and social standing was considered and they were styled as the mixed castes. The marriage of a lower caste man with a higher caste woman was violently denounced and children of such marriages were called *Chandals* or out-castes.

Joint-family system was the frame-work of the society. The eldest male member of the family was the head. He was expected to show high sense of responsibility and duty towards other members of the family. He commanded great respect and authority in the family.

The conception of the four *Ashramas* was probably for the Brahmans only. They were required to pass through four stages (*Ashramas*) in life—*Brahmacharya* (student-life), *Grihastha* (married or householder's state), *Vanaprastha* (seclusion) and *Sannyas* (hermit's life).

Women held an honoured position in the household as well as society. They were allowed to offer oblations in place of husbands. Sati system was not practised. Widows were allowed to marry under certain circumstances. Marriage was considered as a happy bond and marriage at an early age was preferred.

Hospitability was considered as a binding social obligation, and it was raised to the status of a religious duty. Great emphasis was laid on moral purity, self-restraint, refined and courteous manners, respect for elders and abstinence of all kinds.

Life was thoroughly ritualized and society was organised on a conscious basis. The domestic life of an ideal Aryan was a series of sacraments (*Samskaras*). From the very birth a man was required to pass through a series of ceremonies, each of which was done at a definite stage of his life ; for example the ceremonies on the occasion of birth, naming, first feeding, initiation, education, marriage, etc. A Grihastha or householder was expected to perform several domestic rites, such as feeding the gods and guests, giving alms to students, sages, performing sacrifices, etc. The *Grihya-Sutras* by prescribing in the minutest details the duty of a man from birth to burial, laying down the ceremonies for each occasion, determined the secular life of the househelder and formulated the discipline of the household. It is this body of the domestic ritual and its discipline that transformed the society into a single community known later on the Hindu community. Thus the social basis of life was firmly and solidly laid down in the Sutra period.

Economic Life. People lived mostly in villages and followed the profession of agriculture. Rice and barley were the staple crops. Cattle were considered invaluable possessions. The higher classes were fond of cattle-keeping. Reverence for the cow was rapidly growing. Vaisyas were engaged in trade, commerce and agriculture. Some sort of currency was probably in vogue, though a good deal of trade was managed by way of barter. Vessels and tools of copper, brass, iron, stone and clay were made. Besides spinning and weaving people pursued variety of professions, arts and crafts. Some crafts were organised in guilds. Various weights and measures were known. Spacious houses containing many rooms were constructed. Two wheeled wooden carriage or *rath* was the chief means of transport.

Religious Life. The Sutra age witnessed the growth of the ritualistic religion. Sacrifices, with their complicated ritual, increased in number. Animals were frequently sacrificed and *Sulagava* (spit-ox) was a special animal sacrifice. Accompanying the ritual acts prayers to a very large number of gods were offered. Gradually there appeared element of magic in the ritual. A belief in the magic power of the sacrifice was widely growing.

It was believed that the magic power of the sacrifice could be employed to wash away sins, to cure diseases and to acquire certain qualities. Fire in the domestic ritual acquired a very great significance. It was the duty of a Grihastha or house-holder and members of his family to see that it was kept constantly burning. The family rites could be performed only in the domestic fire. The elaborate sacrifices and complicated ritual enabled the Brahmans to acquire supremacy over other castes. They alone could perform the sacrifices.

To sum up, formulae, observances and sacraments became the order of the day and sacrificial rites and duties were rigidly systematised. Ethical purity was also emphasised and virtues like purity, perseverance, kindness, self-restraint, forbearance etc., were prescribed together with religious rites. People believed in the Karma and re-birth, mixed the ideas of a happy heaven and a horrid hell.

Political Life. The Dharma-Sutras throw a flood light on the political conditions of the age. They conceived the state as an organic whole in which various elements like king, men, women, etc., play their role according to Dharma or Law. Life was also considered as a whole without distinction of public or private, individual or collective. Each person, instead of his rights and privileges, had his duties and responsibilities prescribed by laws, customs and traditions. This conception raised society above individual. Individuality was not significant. It was subordinated to society. The Dharma Sutras laid down the duties of the king, and attempted to check his tyranny. He was to protect his subjects from danger and molestation, to take measures to ensure victories, chastise the robbers and the evil-doers, support the Brahmans, poor, needy disabled and infirm people, establish peace and order, and dispense even-handed justice. The *Purohit* was an important official of the State and in many matters the king had to act according to his advice. Probably the *Purohit* moderated the autocratic power of the king. Besides the Purohit, there was a body of advisers consisting of Brahmans. It was called *Parishad* and it advised the king on all matters—religious, social, political and judicial. There was a magnificent palace for the king to live in and a magnificent assembly house for

entertainment. The king was at the helm and he was the fountain head of power and authority. Though monarchy was normally hereditary, there are references to elective monarchy.

For carrying on the administration and protecting other interests people paid taxes to the king. They varied from one-sixth to one-'enth of the product of land. But the king was not authorised to take property for his own use from his subjects. There was a regular administrative machinery and the village was the basic administrative unit. The king appointed a regular hierarchy of officers for the purpose of administration.

The king himself administered civil and criminal justice. But there was no code of positive law. The Vedas, the Vedangas, Dharma Shastras, traditions and customs were the sources of law. There were the real beginnings of a common civil and criminial laws, a code of social behaviour and relationship, theories of property etc. In the Dharma Sutras, however, equality before law was not well established. A Brahman was leniently punished compared with a Sudra for one and the same crime. Physical chastisement and exile from country was generally the punishment for crimes. Fines were not legally systematised. There were regular rules of inheritance of landed property.

The Epics

The Great Epics, their Authors and Dates of Composition. The two great epic poems are the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat*. The Ramayan is believed to be the work of Valmiki and the composition of the Mahabharat is ascribed to the sage Vyas. But the Epics, as we now have them, do not belong to any one age or any one author. Their present form is the result of additions from time to time in their several recensions. The latest recension of the Ramayan in the form in which we find it to-day was about 200 A.D. and that of the Mahabharat about the same time or slightly later. According to Winternnitz the earliest date of the composition of the Ramayan is considered to be 200 or 300 B.C., and that of the Mahabharat still earlier, probably the 4th century B.C. However, by the second century B.C., most of the work was complete. But both the epics speak

of the time much earlier than the time of their earliest composition.

The two great epics are neither the creations of poetical imagination, nor pure myth or allegory. But fact, fiction and allegory are, undoubtedly, closely interwoven in these two epics. The origin of the great epics lies in the *gathas* or ballads of heroes and of heroic events sung by bards in courts on the occasions of religious sacrifices or great feasts.[1] In remnants and fragments, some of these heroic songs have been preserved in our two great epics. The Ramayan, in its broad outline, discloses the history of the Aryan penetration into Southern India. 'The narrative portion of the Mahabharat tells us how some trivial dynastic quarrel brought to a head the long standing contentions of the Indo-Aryan tribes.'

The Story of the Ramayan. King Dashratha, the ruler of Ayodhya, had four sons from his three queens. In his old age he declared his eldest son Rama as his heir-apparent. But his step-mother queen Kaikeyi opposed this. She managed to secure from her husband King Dashratha a promise that her son Bharat should be appointed as the heir-apparent or *Yuvraj* and Rama should be exiled for fourteen years. In obedience to the wishes of his parents Rama went to the forests with his wife Sita and younger brother Laxman. It shocked Dashratha so much that he died. Bharat refused to ascend the throne but he agreed to rule in absence of Rama as his representative.

In the course of his wanderings once Rama was camping at Panchwati with Sita and Laxman. There, in absence of Rama and Laxman, Ravana, king of Lanka (Ceylon), abducted Sita to his capital. This was followed by prolonged war between Rama and Ravana. Ultimately Ravana was defeated and killed and Sita recovered. Soon after this they returned to Ayodhya as fourteen years of exile were over. But, as some doubted the chastity of Sita at Ayodhya, Rama exiled her. She took refuge in hermitage of Rishi Valmiki. There twin sons, Lava and Kush, were born to her. Later on their identity was discovered and they succeeded Rama.

Early History of India by N.N. Ghosh, p. 37.

The Story of Mahabharat. King Pandu died leaving behind his five minor sons known as the Pandavas. He was succeeded by his brother Dhritarashtra whose sons were called Kauravas. The Pandavas and the Kauravas were educated together. Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, conspired many times to bring down the fall of the Pandavas, but he failed. The Pandavas suffered at his hands a good deal including a prolonged exile of thirteen years in the forests. At last the Pandavas claimed their share of the kingdom. But Duryodhana refused to agree to it. This led to the famous battle of *Mahabharat* on the plain of Kurukshetra for eighteen days. At the end of the battle all the Kauravas were slain with hundreds of thousands of their supporters. Yudhisthira, the eldest of the Pandavas, was crowned as king at Hastinapur. After ruling for some years all the five Pandava brothers renounced the world, leaving the kingdom to Parikshit, the grandson of Arjuna.

The Gita. When the two armies of the Kauravas and the Pandavas stood face to face at Kurukshetra for the battle, Arjuna hesitated to take up arms against his own kith and kin. Then Lord Krishna offered the divine advice to Arjuna. It is put in the Gita, 'The song celestial'. Krishna explained to Arjuna, as recorded in the Gita, that he was a Kshatriya and as a Kshatriya he must fight. Krishna told Arjuna that he was very much mistaken when he thought that he was killing his own kith and kin in the battle. The soul is eternal. Neither sword nor fire nor wind nor water can kill or destroy it. Then Krishna explained to him his divine message. He points out the right path to a confused person when he observes the interests of the self-conflict with duty. The Gita lays emphasis on the action and not its fruits. Action must be done as an offering to the Divine. The performation of selfless action, or the disinterested service is one's duty. It is the supreme virtue and leads one to salvation or communion with God.

According to Gita 'true knowledge is the knowledge of God, the knowledge of man's relations with God and the knowledge of his relation with the Universe.'

The Gita advocates union of soul with God which is to be achieved by any of the three methods-Karma, Jnana and Bhakti.

It preaches the doctrine of divine incarnation and non-violence. But the non-violence of the Gita is resistance to evil violently or non-violently as the circumstances may demand. The Gita on the whole is a gospel of life. The problems that it explains are universal. It is one of the noblest and most popular products of Indian thought. It commands great reverence in India and holds honourable rank in the world literature. Probably it is the most translated book next to the Bible in the world.

Importance of the Epics. The two epics have a great importance for the student of history as they furnish plenty of valuable information about the social and cultural organisation and the political institutions of the Epic Age. Equally important is their literary and philosophical value. They are the finest pieces of Indian literature. The Mahabharat is considered as the biggest of the world's epics. It is a veritable treasure-house of Indian lore, both religious and secular. Both the epics describe in splendid language the various emotions and events.

Apart from their historical and literary importance the two epics are inexhaustible treasure-houses filled with material of every kind. They serve the purpose of manual of law and morality. They represent to the people the high ideals of family life which have taken a firm root in Indian thought and tradition. The characters of the epics have been standing forth as moral examples to successive generations of Hindus. Rama is still regarded as an ideal son, an ideal king ; Sita is still supposed as a model for Indian womanhood, both in purity and fidelity ; Laxman is still looked up as an ideal brother. Similarly, Yudhisthira is considered as an embodiment of truthfulness and Lord Krishna is considered as an incarnation of god Vishnu. In fact, for centuries together 'Indians have turned in sorrow, in joy and in daily toil to these Epics for solace and inspiration. In this sense they have become national possessions, keeping alive, through the long periods of disunity, strife and misery, the idea of common origin and of common traditions.[1]

Political Conditions. The epics reveal to us conditions considerably different from those in the Vedic periods, in the political, social and religious life of the Hindus. The Aryans had spread further towards east as is evident from the men-

tion of such kingdoms as Magadha and Anga, not stated or referred to in the Brahmans. The Aryans had now established powerful states like Panchala, Kashi, Koshala etc. The political horizon of the Aryans widened more extensively than hitherto seen and they formed the conception of universal dominion. The ideal of "*Samrat*" and "*Samrajya*" which are referred to in the Brahmans received a more precise and concrete shape in the Epic Age. Those monarchs who could bring under subjection many petty rulers called '*rajans*' claimed the title of *Samrat*. *Digvijaya* or the conquest of the quarters was the symbol of political supremacy, though actual annexation of conquered territories might not have taken place. Acceptance of the supremacy by the conquered kings was enough. Generally the assumption of the title of *Samrat* was emphasised by the performance of the *rajasuya* or *asvamedha* sacrifices which symbolised the degree of power and prestige attained by kings. The dependent monarchs usually attended these ceremonies as feudal lords and materially helped their *Samrat* in his wars. Thus feudalism, which played an important role in the Indian political state in the early and medieval India, was fairly established. The king was not absolute despot. He was to be guided and assisted by a *Mantriparisad* (*Shantiparva* of the Mahabharat, LXXXV, 7-11). But there were no popular assemblies like *Sabha* or *Samiti* to check the power of a king. There were a large number of subordinate officers to carry on the work of administration. Kings of the Epic Age lived in pomp and splendour. Gambling, music, hunting, fighting, wrestling and drinking were popular with them.

In the age of Mahabharat there were *ganas* or states having the republican form of government.[1] Sometimes many ganas combined together and formed a *Sangha* or a confederation. The villages enjoyed local autonomy. Each village had its own set of officers. The headman of the village was known as the *gramini*. The succession to the throne was hereditary, the eldest son succeeding to the throne. Sometimes the king abdi-

Mahabharat, *Shantiparva*, Chapter 107, Verses 6-32.

cated or retired in favour of his eldest son. But exceptions were made in case the eldest son was physically or mentally invalid—for example, Dhritarashtra being born blind the younger son Pandu became king. The royal army consisted of infantry, chariots, elephants and cavalry. There were slingers and rock-throwers also. The soldiers used bows, poisoned arrows, swords and battle-axes. Probably there were five weapons or 'magically blazing' weapons like *chakra*. Fighting was mostly done by the Kshatriyas. They considered death on the battle-field noblest. Defence of religion and country was entrusted to them.

Social Conditions. The Hindus of the Epic Age lived a life of great simplicity, integrity and honesty. They led great emphasis on the development of morality and virtues. They rarely missed their morning bath and prayer. Equally simple were their food and dress. The use of liquor and flesh as part of diet, which are frequently referred in Vedic period, was greatly disfavoured and decried. Vegetarianism was gaining ground. People were fond of picnics and feasts.[1] But some of the other social vices like dicing and gambling seem to have continued at least among the upper classes of the society. Among the fruits the mango is referred to for the first time in the Epics. The dress of a Hindu consisted of two or three pieces of garments—a long piece of cloth for the upper part of the body, another long piece for the lower part and a turban for the head. Trousers, coats and shirts were unknown and probably the art of cutting and sewing had not come into vogue. The bulk of the people lived in villages which were fairly well planned. They were surrounded with mud walls. There were towns and cities. Each had its defences, battlements and moats.

The caste-system had become more definitely established. Besides the four original castes innumerable sub-castes were classified. Probably mixed marriages between the castes and the hereditary occupations contributed to the growth of the sub-castes. The supremacy of the Brahmans which was challenged in the age of Upanishads was re-established. The Brahmans

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1 *Indo-Aryans* by R. Mittra, Vol. II, p. 422.

now had the upper hand in society. A *samrat* or raja had usually a Brahman minister who advised and guided the king. Occasionally the Brahman minister was also his spiritual *Guru*. Everyone from prince to peasant was afraid of offending a Brahman whose fire of wrath was supposed to be capable of burning the offender to ashes. Apart from the castes there were four varnas.

The position of women marked a slight deterioration from the Vedic Age. Marriage was considered to be a sacred tie. The Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas could marry women of lower castes, but Sudras were enjoined to marry in their own caste. The custom of *sati* of which no mention is made in the Vedic literature was practised in the Epic Age. Child marriage was unknown and women were married when they were grown up and frequently the system of *Swayamvara* or self-choice of a husband by a princess from among the assembled suitors was practised. Polygamy was practised. The girls of the higher classes were educated and had regular training in singing and dancing. Wife freely participated with her husband in the social and religious ceremonies.

The merchants and the artisans were organised in guilds. Their heads were styled *Mahajans*. They controlled the guilds. Each town had a number of guilds. Next to the priestly class they wielded great influence. There were taxes levied by the king. Perhaps they were paid mostly in kind. A village continued the basis of economic organisation. But urban life came into prominence and trade and industries flourished. Agriculture, handicrafts and industries received royal attention.

In the Epic Age, we hear about *parishads* and other seats of learning where scholars received pupils for education. A child was placed, at an early age, under the charge of a teacher with whom he lived for many years under strict discipline. Princes of the ruling dynasties and other Kshatriya students were early trained in arms as in arts and were well acquainted with the bow and arrow, the sword and the javelin. The study of the Vedas was considered the most important duty while that of the remaining sciences—astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, prosody etc.,—was regarded as merely supplementary.

Religious Conditions. New gods that superseded the Vedic gods arose in the Epic Age. The nature-gods of the Vedas were relegated into subordinate position by the new gods and goddesses Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Ganesh, Laxmi, Parvati, Surya etc. A popular belief was that Vishnu took an incarnation to punish the wicked, to restore religion and establish righteousness on earth. In spite of the concept of Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh), the Unity of Brahman or God was emphasized. The doctrine of *karma* and rebirth as well as the practice of *tapasya* or renunciation and meditation accompanied by severe asceticism were prevalent in the Epic period. Though emphasis was laid on sacrifices in the age of the Ramayan, but they had lost a good deal of their significance in the Mahabharat period. A belief was gaining ground that real sacrifice consists in truth, non-violence, self-restraint, purity of mind and action, deep meditation and getting rid of desires or *trishna*.

Gleanings from the Smritis or the Dharma-Shastras[1]

The *Dharma-Shastras* or *Smritis* are the law books, written in the *Sloka* metre. The chief among them are the *Manav dharma-shastra*, the *Vishnu dharma-shastra*, the *Yajnavalkya Smriti* and the *Narad Smriti*. *Manav dharma-shastra* or the *Manu Smriti* is the oldest and most famous. Its writer Manu is supposed to be the first king and the first law-giver. Later on, minor Smritis and commentaries like the Mitakshara were written. These Smritis are not merely the books of civil and criminal laws and other rules, but they cover every detail of the daily life of the individual. They throw a flood light on the social and political life of the age, an account of which is given below :—

Society. Caste-system had formed the framework of the society. It was made up of the *Dvijati* or the three twice-born castes—Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas and the Ekajatis or the Sudras. Each of them formed a Varna or caste. There were mixed castes also. They originated from adultery, inter-marriages and illicit relations. Foreigners were absorbed in the

Refer to *Hindu Civilisation* by R. K. Mookerji, pp. 159-178 ; *History of Ancient India* by R. S. Tripathi, pp. 75-81 ; *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, pp. 277-297.

society. There were some non-Aryans called Chandals and Mlechhas. Their status was lower than that of the Sudras. They lived outside the villages.

Each caste had its duties and privileges. A Brahman was known for his integrity of character, high standard of spirituality and wide knowledge about God and Universe. He was to teach, perform Yajna, advise kings and officials, act as assessors or judge and receive gifts. He was punishable in law but not by capital punishment. A Kshatriya had to study, perform sacrifice, and give charity, but his main profession was fighting bravely and protecting people fearlessly. A Vaishya followed agriculture, tended cattle, performed Yajna, engaged himself in trade and commerce and lent money on interest. A Sudra offered his services for the comforts of higher castes. He was a menial servant. But he was denied the hearing of the sacred text and the performance of *samskars* or sacraments. Slavery existed in society and Manu mentions slaves of seven types. Dharmashastras did not give equal privileges and rights to men and women. The position of woman was subordinate to that of man. She was to depend on her male relatives. She was denied the privilege of the study of the Vedas and other sacred works. Neither she was allowed to perform sacraments nor own property in her name. A widow was debarred from participating in auspicious ceremonies. Neither *Sati* nor *Pardah* system was in vogue. But inspite of lowering of the general status of women they were well respected in society as is evidenced by Manu's own statement.[1]

Ashrams or Stages of Life. The Dharmshastras describe Ashrams or four stages of life. They were observed by a *Dvija* or twice-born. The first was *Brahmacharya Ashram* during which a person after the *Upnayan* ceremony studied the Vedas and other sacred works under the guidance of a teacher. It was

यत्र नार्यस्तु पूज्यन्ते रमन्ते तत्र देवताः ।
यत्रैतास्तु न पूज्यन्ते सर्वास्तत्राऽफलाः क्रियाः ।।

"Where women are worshipped (honoured), the gods shower their blessings ; but where they are not honoured, all acts are fruitless." (*Manu Smriti*, III, 56)

the period of acquiring knowledge. After the completion of education a person married and entered the second stage of his life, *Grihastha Ashram*. As a house-holder he was to continue progeny, offer charity, give alms and perform Yajnas. Then he renounced the world, and went to a hermitage in the forest for meditation. This was the third stage, *Vanaprastha Ashram*. This was followed by the fourth and the last stage *Sanyasa Ashram*, when a person subjected himself to self-mortification and asceticism, tried to comprehend the Divine Reality and while wandering from place to place he explained to the people the path of Truth and Righteousness.

People knew well the art of architecture and constructed houses of several storeys in rows. They used mud, brick, stone and timber for the purpose.

Economic Conditions. People lived in villages as well as towns and followed a large number of professions, arts and crafts. The *Smritis* refer to goldsmiths, blacksmiths, washermen, dyers, oilmen, weavers, tailors, potters, carpenters, workers in cane and bamboo, makers of bow and arrow, metal workers etc. There were artisans, mechanics and craftsmen also. But agriculture was the main occupation of the people. Cotton, barley, wheat, rice, sugarcane, mudgna-beams and vegetables were grown. The live-stock which included cow, sheep and goat was well herded and looked after.

Vaishyas carried on trade. Though exchange was by barter, coin made of gold, silver and copper were also used. Government regulated the prices and punished those who weighed or measured less. There was land as well as sea-borne traffic. Goods were transported along land-routes in carts or on animals. River traffic was also well-known. People knew the art of navigation. The government controlled the exports and customs, excise and octroi duties were levied on goods. For business purposes money was lent out on interest. Traders organised themselves in syndicates.

Political Conditions. The Northern India was divided into many States each of which was ruled by a king. There were feudatory chiefs who used to render military help to the king who was to be respected like a deity. Probably people believed

in the divine powers of the king.[1] But king's absolute autocracy was not there. He was to be assisted in the work of administration by secretaries and guided by the advice of cabinet or *parishad* consisting of seven or eight ministers. He was expected to devote his life for the welfare, progress and prosperity of his subjects. He was the fountain-head of justice and decided cases openly in the court.

For the smooth working of the administration there were a host of officials assisted by spies and others. Superior officials were designated as *Mahamatras*, whereas ordinary ones *Yuktas*. There were six principal administrative departments—Finance, Espionage, Military, Police, Local Self-Government and Justice. A considerable degree of self-government was granted to the people. They enjoyed autonomy. They were free to legislate for themselves the way they liked.

Taxes appeared to be light and equitable. They were not collected unrighteously. Merchants were required to pay one-fifth of their profit and agricultural taxes varied from one-sixth to one-twelfth. Artisans, smiths and labourers were given certain facilities for taxation. They paid their taxes in the form of a day's labour monthly.

The Caste System

The caste system of the Hindus in its present form developed in the later Vedic Age and the Epic periods and therefore it is more than 2,000 years old. It is complicated and has split up Hindu society into more than 3,000 water-tight compartments. It has not only been the strongest impediment in the way of the solidarity of the Hindus but has created social inequality among them. It was against this system that the Buddha and Mahavir, Nanak and Kabir raised their standard of revolt, but it has been surviving all the onslaughts.

In the words of V. A. Smith a caste is a group of families

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1 बालोऽपि नात्रमन्तव्यो मनुष्य इतिभूमिपः ।
महती देवता ह्येषा नर रूपेण तिष्ठति ॥
"A king, though an infant, must not be despised because he looks a human being ; verily, he is a great deity in human form." (*Manu Smriti*, VII, 8)

internally united by peculiar rules for the observance of ceremonial purity especially in matters of diet and marriage. But this definition does not hold good to-day, as there are no rigid rules binding a family in matters of diet. To-day, the caste tie is very loose and only nominal.

The Origin of the Caste-system—Racial Factor or Varna or Colour was the original basis of the Caste-system. In what manner and at what time exactly this caste-system originated is difficult to say. There is little doubt that in its very early stages, the Indo-Aryans had no social or professional groups. At first they lived as one homogeneous people. In the Rigvedic Age there were only two classes of people in society, the Aryans and the non-Aryans, or the fair-skinned Aryans and the dark-coloured aborigines. The ancient Aryan society was divided on the basis of colour. The old pride of a conqueror was retained by the Aryans. It made them unwilling to allow the fusion of their race with that of the conquered *Dasyus*. The fair-complexioned Aryans did not mix with the dark-skinned *dasyus*. Further grouping of the Aryan society into Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas (each was styled as Varna) took place centuries after and the process developed much on the lines of evolution.

Division of Labour, another basis. In the later Vedic period, when the tribal chiefs developed into big territorial monarchs, they lived in august and pompous courts. They loved to perform religious rites on an elaborate and pompous scale. At this time religion became more ritualistic. This involved strict adherence to the details of forms and the formulæ of the religious rites and ceremonies. Together with this, an average man became too busy to perform his rites and ceremonies and to understand the sacred hymns and their exact significance. All this, therefore, provided sufficient work for a class of specialists and therefore such a group arose in the descendants of the old priest community of the Rigvedic times. They undertook to perform these elaborate ceremonies and sacrificial worships on behalf of the princes and people and composed songs to applaud their masters' triumphs. They, being in custody of the spiritual work of the society, devoted their life for mastering the vastly elaborate rules and rituals of sacrificial worship and thus

acquiring special knowledge to perform them in all their minutest details. Naturally they acquired a position of lofty aloofness from the rest of the people of the Aryan society who were more or less engrossed in mundane affairs. This accounts for the rise and the subsequent supremacy of the Brahman caste.

A distinction being thus made with regard to one class of society, distinctions in other spheres of work soon made their appearance and obtained places in society according to the nature and importance of the work. In the early days of the Rigvedic Age during the tribal wars every able bodied man accompanied his chief to the battle and returned to his plough in times of peace. But the extension of their territories and constant wars compelled the Aryan rulers to keep a body of trained and skilled soldiers in constant attendance so that their services could be requisitioned at any moment of emergency. It was on this body of the professional men that the task of defence and the brunt of fighting fell and the system of employing the untrained ploughmen in the times of war was gradually discouraged. Thus this class of fighters and warriors in due course formed themselves into a separate independent class with their own social and political traditions and they were styled *Kshatriyas*. The rest of the Aryans, engaged in odd jobs, *i.e.*, trade, industry, crafts, and agriculture, were called the *Vaishyas* who obtained a lower position than that of the Kshatriyas. The fourth class of men who formed the bulk of the population was called the *Sudras*. They were the menial and servile workers whose duty was to serve the other three classes. The rank of the Sudras who occupied the lowest position was swollen by the aborigines.

This is the historical origin of the caste-system which was in the beginning, as mentioned above, based on a division of labour. Therefore, in its original form it was class-system rather than caste-system. Based as the distinctions were on the professions and scientific and rational ground it was not difficult for man to change from one caste to another. Change of profession could lead to a change of caste. Individuals as well as families could pass from caste to caste. The fact that along with the inclusion of Dravidian gods in the Aryan pantheon, Dravidian priests were accepted as Brahmans is an evidence of the fluidity of the system

in the beginning. A man's class was decided by his profession and conduct and not by his birth as it is done to-day. *Drona-charya*, the famous military instructor of the Pandava brothers of Mahabharat, was a Brahman by birth ; the great sage *Vashistha* was born of a prostitute ; Parashu Ram, a Brahman, became a Kshatriya ; *Vyasa* was of a fisher-woman while *Vidura*, the guide, philosopher and friend of the king Dhritarashtra was a *dasiputra*. Certain non-Aryan tribes were allowed to join Aryan castes after performing certain rites. 'Regarding the other essentials of the caste-system, there is nothing to show that inter-dining and inter-marriages between members of different classes were prohibited,' although a free social intercourse of the three upper classes with the lower class of the Sudras was regarded with great disfavour.

Evolution of the Caste-system. The racial factor, the philosophy of action, the basic idea in political domination and the occupational bias—all have contributed their share in the formation of the caste-system. However, starting originally from four classes the caste-system today has become very complicated. These four classes in course of time were divided and sub-divided into many sub-castes or water-tight compartments. They are to-day not based upon occupations, religious beliefs or philosophical principles but only birth determines the caste or sub-caste of a man. With the number of castes the rigidity of the system also developed. The following factors mainly contributed for the inflexibility of the caste-system.

The class-divisions had become hereditary due to the selfishness of the priestly class 'who gave a fantastic and supernatural explanation of their origin and they interpreted *sastric* injunctions to perpetuate the hereditary superiority of their class.' In the *sutras* rules were laid down that no body could serve as a priest who was not born a Brahman. To keep a permanent hold upon the Hindu society, the Brahmans, the priestly class, not only became the king-makers, but also the authors of so many new doctrines and rigid superstitions with the result that the society was obliged to evolve the present unique social institution of motely groups of castes.

With the lapse of time, however, caste distinctions became

more rigid and each group began to develop its own social code and organisation. Consequently these groups became rigidly hereditary and changes from one caste to another was becoming increasingly difficult and almost impossible. Besides the time factor, the formation of sub-castes came to be associated with the adoption of a new profession or craft. Every professional group or guild developed into a caste and sub-caste. The weavers, the fishermen, the carpenters, the smiths, the washermen, etc.—all formed a separate caste. The aboriginal tribes which entered the Aryan-fold formed separate castes such as the *Rajabanshis* of Bengal and the *Gonds* of Madhya Pradesh. Later on, the foreigners like the Greeks, the Sakas, the Parthians, the Huns who joined the Hindu-fold and embraced Hinduism were assigned new castes such as Gujjars of the Hindu society. Inter-marriages with these and other groups gave birth to new castes.

Migration of groups helped in the formation of many new castes. When some members of a class or a caste migrated to any other part of the country, gradually they developed different social code of manners and customs. A marked distinction thus appeared between them and their brethren who stayed at home. With the passing of time such distinctions grew very rigid and all social intercourse between the two groups came to be discouraged. For example, the Punjabi Brahman held himself aloof from the Bengali Brahman. Sometimes, changes in customs and occupations and the degradation from the original castes due to the non-observance of the rigid caste rules led to the formation of separate castes.

The principle of *Ahimsa*—non-killing of animals—had influenced potentially the evolution of the caste-system. When the Jains and the Buddhists emphasised Ahimsa, a distinction between vegetarians and non-vegetarians was gradually established and the fresh rules of conduct were framed for the followers of Ahimsa. Thus Buddhists and Jains who were vegetarians formed separate castes within their groups. Later on, the growth of new sects led to the rise of additional castes such as the Lingayets and Kabir-Panthis. The arrival of the Muslims and their subsequent settlement as rulers of this country also contri-

buted towards the rigidity of the system and made it all the more stiffened. As the Muslims, unlike the earlier invaders of India, possessed a strong and coherent culture of their own, they could not be absorbed into the Hindu society. They remained exclusively a distinct group. On the other hand, when the Hindus could not oust them from this country, they endeavoured to guard jealously their identity and maintain their social culture and religious customs by taking shelter behind the caste-system. The rigidity of the caste-rules was further hardened and social intercourse with the Muslims was forbidden by the leaders of the society. It was a reaction for the defence of the Hindu society.

Merits of the Caste-system. Originally the system was introduced to meet the needs of the time when different races—the Aryans and the non-Aryans—had to live together in amity and peace. This had helped to preserve the two different races and cultures—the Aryans and the Dravidians. In fact, it took an organic view of society and no tribe or caste, however low in culture, was believed to deserve obliteration in the living organism of society. In later periods it has been a great stabilizing force by serving Hinduism as Noah's ark, protecting its vital elements, ideals and culture. It engendered a spirit of orthodoxy, exclusiveness and class pride which served as a strong bulwark against foreign encroachments. It has enabled the Hindu society to withstand the shocks of the Muslim invasions. Indeed, it has not only prevented indiscriminate racial mixture of blood, custom or speech, but it has contributed considerably to the stability of the Hindu national morals, religion, art and craftsmanship, inspite of the fact that the Hindu community has been passing through centuries of political turmoils and vicissitudes, conflict and confusion.

The caste-system enabled Hinduism to expand its ranks. Its existence facilitated the absorption of foreign elements into the folds of the Hindu society. It was open to the sweet will of the foreign races to adopt Hinduism and yet preserve their own cultures' fundamentals by setting up new castes of their own. This facility and flexibility of the system explains the fact that race after race of the foreign invaders of India was absorbed into Hinduism.

The system, introduced on the basis of the division of labour in society, promoted economic strength and efficiency in professions and functions. When the births began to determine the castes, the system preserved skilled labour by transmitting vocational skill from generation to generation. It has thus made progress possible and maintained the continuity of professions and crafts.

In the ages gone by it minimised the evils of competition in trade and industry, maintained professional discipline and honour and served the purpose of trade guilds and trade unions. Apart from this, the system was a unit of political regulation when the state was in a nebulous condition. It gave a sort of functional democracy to the Hindu community.

In addition to the above mentioned advantages, the caste-system fostered a spirit of brotherhood and produced greater unity, solidarity and compactness among the members belonging to the same caste. In times of distress and unemployment the persons of the same caste always count upon help and support of their other brethren. Thus the system has been useful in promoting civic virtues of self-sacrifice, love and service. Again the caste *panchayats* and their regulations secured subordination of the individual to an organised body, restrained vice and prevented pauperism. Therefore, the caste-system proved a useful social institution.

Demerits of the Caste-system. If the institution of caste has been of great value to Hinduism, it cannot be denied that many evils have also resulted from the system. It has literally split up the Hindu society into hundreds of herediary castes and sub-castes and so it fostered a spirit of exclusiveness and class pride, narrowed the outlook and created wide gulfs between the various sections of the community. It has, as such, stood in the way of national and collective consciousness and thus proved a disintegrating rather than a uniting factor.

It is a check on the economic and intellectual progress and a great stumbling block in the way of social reforms, because it keeps economic and intellectual opportunities confined to a certain section of the population only and denies them to other. A sweeper or a cobbler, for example, now-a-days cannot be per-

mitted to devote himself to any educational or scientific profession, even when he has natural aptitude and physical and intellectual equipment for it. Worthy and capable persons are prevented by caste rigours to get into their proper and rightful places. This inelastic attitude of the system suppresses genius, represses individual liberty and is a dead weight on initiative and enterprise of the members. Much of human energy and talent remains unutilised by the community with a consequent loss to its culture and civilisation. "Modern democracy has a tendency for levelling down all talents. Caste, on the contrary, did not make proper provision for low-born talents or high-born incompetents."

In the economic field, caste-system undermines the efficiency of labour and prevents perfect mobility of labour, capital and productive effort and therefore neither the large scale industries are developed nor the economic resources of the country are exploited to the best advantage of the people. Apart from this, the system perpetuates exploitation of the economically weaker and socially inferior classes and protects privileged classes, and thus it fosters economic discontentment and social prejudices.

The needless multiplication of the castes and the subsequent inflexibility and rigid social code of each has been causing to-day enormous waste of time, money and energy due to series of taboos (several prohibitions in cooking, eating, drinking, etc.). Then, it does not allow the Hindus to adopt the newer and better methods of life and shuts them off from free association with the non-Hindus and consequently the Hindus have not been able to keep pace with the progress of the world. The Hindu society and religion has been shrinking down as their folds have been blocked for others by the caste-system. One can neither enter Hindu society nor embrace Hinduism even if one believes in it. Again, the system has, to-day, become a great engine of oppression and intolerance. It has condemned large groups of people to a life of degradation without any hope of redemption. It has created the curse of untouchability, an evil which has been sapping the vitals of the Hindu society. Political freedom has no meaning so long the

social tyranny in the form of untouchability exists. The caste-system had its repercussions on the political history of the country. Caste rivalries and feuds divided the society into mutually jealous groups that would not combine and co-operate even in the face of common national perils and foreigners' invasions. Then, the defence of the country being assigned to the *kshatriyas* or military class alone, the rest of the people were unconcerned at the time of invasion. Never or rarely, indeed, did the masses feel stirred during the Muslim invasions of India. The brunt of the fighting was borne by *kshatriyas* which was only a section of the population.

To sum up, the caste-system enabled Hinduism to expand its ranks, led to the preservation of skilled labour and acted as the stabilising force and preserved the Hindu culture. On the other hand, it has broken the solidarity of the Hindu society, suppressed the liberty of the individuals, become the instrument of oppression and is fostering disruptive social and political forces. It has been a milestone round the neck of the Hindus and dragging them with a rapid speed towards political and social decline.

The Future of the Caste-system. Though the caste-system had served some useful purpose in the past, but now it has outgrown its usefulness. Today the political, social and economic conditions in India are no longer favourable to the maintenance of the time-honoured caste-distinctions. There are many factors which are undermining the system slowly but steadily and surely. Western civilisation and education, modern commercial and economic competition have deprived many functional castes of their professions. The vocational distinction of the caste-system has practically disappeared. A person born in a particular caste does not stick to the profession of his ancestors, but takes an occupation for which he finds his talent best fitted or takes to a career into which circumstances have driven him. Easy and rapid means of communication, growth of large towns, establishment of large factories and concerns, political and social associations, clubs, schools, colleges, cinemas, have all led to closer association of members of different castes and communities.. It results in inter-dining and mixing for social functions. This

has destroyed the exclusiveness, conservatism and inflexibility of the castes. The legislature has also done its part in removing disabilities about the inheritance of property and legitimacy of children born of inter-caste marriages. Law has deprived caste-conferences and caste-panchayats of the most of the disciplinary powers they used to exercise although these powers have not wholly disappeared. Another welcome feature is that our great social and political leaders and the educationally advanced section of the Hindu community are trying to purge the Hindu society of the caste-system. They are convinced about the abolition of the system's prohibitive regulations concerning inter-dining and inter-marriage. However, the institution has already lost and is still losing its old rigour and rigidity.

General Conclusions

The Influence of the Vedic Age. It has been assumed that the Vedic Age of the Aryans had reached the stage of excellence of civilisation. In knowledge, power and social organisation they had attained a high stage. The Vedic Age has been recognised as the age of excellence in all walks of life, and in all subsequent ages attempts have been made to approximate the life of a man to the conditions of the Vedic Age. In the periods that followed all those things that were valuable in man's life—philosophy, religion, sciences and even codes of conduct were traced back to the Vedas. In fact the Vedas have left abiding monuments in all departments of life. All the later intellectual activities of Indian thinkers, to a great extent, have been attempts to present some aspect or the other of the Vedic thought. All that Brahmanism afterwards claimed to be was the inheritance of the Vedic traditions. The entire mythology of the later period is based on that of the Vedic period. 'All the stories narrated in the later Puranas about Vishnu, Siva and Indra have their root in the Vedic mythology. The main philosophical doctrines are based on Vedic conceptions.' All the philosophical systems in Hinduism are representations of the Vedic conception of the nature, goal of man and his relation to the Universe. In fact the philosophy of the Vedas was very synthetical and all embracing. Even ordinary sciences like astronomy and medicine were associated with the

Vedas. The entire Sanskrit literature of the later ages records the attempts of ancient Indians to understand the Vedic civilisation, to revive the Vedic culture and to approximate their lives to the ideals of the Vedic civilisation.

Main achievements of the Later Vedic and Sutra Ages and Epic periods.[1] The organisation of the Hinduism is one of the principal achievements of the later Vedic period. Hinduism is a systematised body of dogmas and doctrines, expounded in the later Vedic literature—the Brahmanas, the Upanishads and the Aranyakas. The doctrines about the Soul (*Atman*), the Absolute (*Brahma*), relation between God and man, and the principles of *karma*, *maya*, *mukti*, transmigration of soul and other special features, that have dominated Hindu thought and moulded the life of every Hindu, were evolved, stated and elaborated in the Upanishads. It was not only the doctrinal basis of Hinduism that was established in the later Vedic times, but the social basis of Hindu life was also firmly and solidly laid. The *Grihya Sutra* prescribed in the minutest details the duties of man from birth to cremation laying down the ceremonies for each occasion—ceremonies at birth, naming, initiation, education, marriage, etc. This created domestic rituals, had formulated the discipline of the household and thus transformed the peoples of India into one single Hindu community. In fact 'it is this body of domestic rituals that makes a Hindu.' If the *Grihya Sutra* created the Hindu community, the *Dharma Sutra* organised the Hindu society on a conscious foundation by laying down social customs, usages, codes and laws.

In addition to the *Grihya Sutra* and the *Dharma Sutra*, equally important is the social doctrine of *Varnashrama Dharma*. It was a social conception by virtue of which the life was divided into four periods—*brahmacharya*, *grihastha*, *vanaprastha* and *sanyas*. Every Hindu householder was to follow this ideal.

Another achievement of the later Vedic period is the development of the *Chaturvarnya System* or the caste-system—division of the society into four classes, Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. It was also an attempt related to the conscious

[1] *A Survey of Indian History* by K. M. Panikkar, Chapter II.

organisation of the Hindu society and maintenance of the supremacy of the priestly class. In the historical evolution of India caste-system as an institution of social order did triumph, but at the expense of national unity and solidarity. Though it proved the antithesis of nationality it kept the balance of social forces and as a social fulcrum it served its purpose well.

But the most important achievement of this period is the geographical conquest of India. In fact, the whole of India had been explored. The rivers, the mountains and the general physical features of every part of India were known. By the Epic Age the conquest of India was complete. The Vedic Aryans knew only the Indo-Gangetic Valley. But the Dharma Sutras describe many different countries and local customs and Baudhayana refers to the mixed character of castes in the Deccan and in the times of the Grihya Sutras the geography of the country was perhaps completely known. The *Kailash* peak, the *Manasarovar* lake, the Himalayas and the country on the northern side of the Himalayas were all known by the time of the Mahabharat. Hinduism with Hindu culture was being carried all over the country. The hermitages in the forests mentioned in the Ramayan must in due course have become colonies—centres from which Hindu life and culture radiated. Slowly in due course the forests were cleared, the rivers navigated and the land brought under cultivation and subsequently the aborigines were gradually assimilated into the social life. This method of the Hinduisation of the aboriginal tribes commenced in the later Vedic period and continues even to this day.

The Legacy of the Aryans.[1] After describing in the preceding pages the main features of the Aryan Civilisation in the Vedic Age, it can be concluded that the Aryans had enriched the Indian life and culture with their contributions. The gifts of the Aryans are summarised as follows :

1. *Lofty Sense of Spirituality.* The Aryans have given us lofty sense of spirituality which has sublimated even the non-Aryan elements in India. The Aryan conception of spirituality has been positive. The Aryans made original contributions in

[1] *India through the Ages* by Jadunath Sarkar, p. 9.

the field of religious beliefs. They perceived God in all, animate and inanimate. They emphasised that *Brahman* or God is the essence of the universe. He has materialised in all existing things. He is the source and refuge of all life. He is *sat* (truth), *chit* (spirit) and *ananda*. Besides the conception of omnipresent God, the Aryans initiated the theories of evolution, the doctrines of immortality of soul, karma, reincarnation, *avataras*, *bhakti*, ritual, renunciation, *havan*, pilgrimage, etc. The validity of these beliefs is proved by their continued vitality, because countless generations in India have consciously sought to model their lives in the light of these doctrines. "They have entered the warp and woof of Indian life to which they have given a meaning and purpose."

The Aryans made original approaches to philosophical thought which are yet to be surpassed. Atheism, monism, pessimism and activism and six systems of philosophy have been their main contributions. These have helped substantially in the making of the Indian mind. The rich Aryan spirituality and religion have been saturating the Indian culture, and people have been initiated into religious spirit from the beginning of life.

2. *The Aryan Literature.* The range of the Aryan literature is very wide. It includes diverse forms of expression as poetry, fable, drama, prose, romance and the sciences. Beginning with the first poetical flights in the Rigveda, the creative spirit of the Aryans produced great literary works like *Brahmanas*, *Samhitas*, *Aranyakas*, *Upanishads*, *Sastras*, *Sutras*, *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat* etc. In their literature there are countless evidences of *the spirit of systematisation or the methodical arrangement of every branch of thought* by a minute analysis of its parts. The *Sutra* literature is the best example of the scientific division and orderly arrangement of rules with a rigid economy of words. Panini's grammar is another example of the most scientific treatment of a language. This has helped considerably in the evolution of Indian philosophy and thought later on. Then, there is the *orderly imagination* in their literary and artistic creation as distinguished from extravagance, grotesqueness or emotional abundance. They systematised all branches of science and arts

in literature to bring out fully their inner and outer harmony. Their literary works reveal to us their eagerness to achieve perfection in all arts, their 'synthetical outlook, refreshing approach and a constructive imagination which has nothing of ludicrousness, exaggeration and sensuousness.' Besides all this, ideas of the Indian culture have later on originated from this copious literature of the Aryans.

3. *The Caste-system and the Four Ashrams.* Another important Aryan legacy is the social institution of the *caste-system and the Varnashram Dharma.* The caste-system was the grading of the people into mutually exclusive groups based upon differences of occupational functions and supposed heredity. It was also aimed to integrate many different races and individuals into one social whole and enabled them to live together in harmony and find room for different stages of civilisation within one cultural unity. The Varnashram Dharam was the conception of the life in one sense peculiarly Aryan. It makes an attempt to combine materiality with spirituality, worldly success with spiritual excellence. Every man must go through the four-fold stages of life. No aspect of human desire or function is overlooked here. The excellence which is sought must be realised through individual as well as social activities.

4. *High Position to Women.* Then comes the honour and *high position* that the Aryans *assigned to women* in society. They rejected feminist institutions like matriarchy and polyandry that prevailed in the pre-Aryan society.

5. *Sanskrit.* Another Aryan legacy is *Sanskrit* which is considered as the most perfect and scientific language in the world. Scholars have made it the basis of the science of philology. It has deeply influenced all other languages of India in vocabulary and structure. This influence has gone so deep that scholars regard all Indian languages as variations from one common Sanskritic base. Even a language like Tamil, with a literature that was fairly developed before the advent of the Aryans, has not escaped this influence. The Sanskritic tradition has not faded with the passage of time. New languages which came in the wake of new invaders, challenged its supremacy, but Sanskrit has held and herhaps deepened its influence. As a

result of this all Indian languages have a large common vocabulary and exhibit marked similarities in grammatical structure. Prominent Indian languages like Hindi, Marathi, Gujrati, Bengala etc., have originated from Sanskrit.

6. *Rural Life.* The Aryans were rural and pastoral in their life. This made them lay out villages. In due course village became an important unit of the social, economic and political life of the Aryans. Consequently local self-government had well evolved in villages. Though centuries have lapsed the traces of the Aryan culture are perceived mostly in villages.

7. *Patriarchal Social System.* An important legacy of the Aryans is the family and the patriarchal social system. Family became a significant unit of the society. It was fairly large, constituted as it was of practically three generations of paternal relations. The head of the family was the patriarch, the oldest male member. He ruled over the family, owned all family property and exacted obedience from all the members of the family. He had to fulfil many obligations towards the different members of the family. The origin of the joint family institution, peculiar to India, is thus traced to the early Aryan family system.

8. Lastly, the institution of *hermitages*, which were distinct alike from the city universities and celibate monasteries of Christian Europe, was another gift of the Aryans. Learned *Rishis* lived in these hermitages (*tapovans*) and they devoted their attention to the practice of virtue and the cultivation of knowledge. Many persons from cities and royal courts visited the *rishis*. Students lived there for education. These hermitages served the purpose of universities and were very effectual for the promotion of Indian system of philosophy, ethics, theology and many branches of literature. They were thus true spring-head of the Hindu civilisation and have maintained the unity and continuity of Indian culture.

The long gap between the Epic Age and the 6th century B.C. in Indian history is filled with confusing details and checkered chronological accounts of several dynasties. They are described in the *Puranas*, which form an encyclopædia of religion, folklore, mythology, traditions and history. Though they are historically very important, yet their value is marred to a great extent,

as history therein is mixed with religion and myth. A long way has yet to be covered before we construct a reliable political history till the 6th century B. C. The task is beset with difficulties. Moreover, we are concerned here not with the political history of the country but with the main cultural currents. Therefore, we pass over the chronological accounts and come to the great religious movements of the sixth century B. C., that have deeply influenced the continuity of the Indian culture and civilisation.

Chapter 5

Jainism and Buddhism

An Era of Revolt. The sixth century B.C. witnessed a great religious ferment in the world. It was during this age that there prevailed in society general, spiritual and moral unrest and consequently reformers all over the world raised their voice against the existing religious order and endeavoured to reconstruct it on a new basis. In the Greek islands of Ionia, Heraclitus preached his new doctrines ; in Iran Zoroaster launched his protest against the prevailing religious superstitions ; and in China people welcomed the philosophic teachings of Confuscius who gave them a higher conception of the duties of life. It was an age when people in India were disgusted with old philosophical dogmas and were striving for simple methods of worship and easier means of escape from the ills of this mundane existence. New leaders of thought and religion sprang into vigorous activities and gave a new orientation to life in this country. It was an era of revolt—an age of protest against the old order of things. The revolt was against the standardization of social patterns, the ritualistic form of religion, the absolute power of the priest-craft and the dead weight of a dead culture. The new philosophy of revolt was anti-social in form and anti-caste in spirit. It preached pure individualism and spiritualisation. It discarded the principle of social immobility, inequality and injustice ; it upheld the sanctity of human intellect and its freedom. It stood for man and woman to achieve his or her salvation as human beings. The ultimate aim of the revolt was

not materialistic but spiritual, not the socialisation but the spiritualisation of life. The spirit of times expressed itself in a number of reforming movements. Humanitarian and theistic movements gathered force and momentum as popular faith in animal sacrifice and barren rituals tended to diminish. These movements judged human progress in terms of spiritual advancement of man. Life was regarded not an end but a means and an idea for spiritualisation. The thinkers of the new movements were pure intellectualists—philosophers—and conceived life as a philosophy of power and knowledge. Outside the Brahmanical Holy Land, spiritual leadership passed from the hands of priestly theologians and sacrificers to ascetics and wanderers (*Sramanas*, *Parivrajakas*) who laid the greatest emphasis on the cessation of craving for the things of the world. These ascetics and wandering teachers rejected the authority of the Vedas and Vedic priests, denounced the blood sacrifices which constituted a very large part of the Brahmanic ritual and even denied the existence of God. Right conduct, they declared, was the only way of getting out of the meshes of *Karma* and *Sansara*. This right conduct included, among other things, the practice of Ahimsa or non-injury to living beings. The greatest of these wandering teachers were Kshatriya princes, Vardhamana Mahavir and Gautam Buddha. The philosophy and the ideologies of the former took the shape of a reforming movement known as Jainism, while those of the latter led to another movement called Buddhism. Like Luther and Calvin of Europe, Mahavir and Gautam Buddha protested against the corruption that had crept into Hinduism. Their movements—Jainism and Buddhism—are the Protestant Hinduism as Lutheranism and Calvinism are Protestant Christianity. Jainism never went beyond the confines of India but it still remains the religion of a wealthy community. Buddhism, extinct in the land of its birth after a glorious career of more than fifteen hundred years, remains to this day one of the greatest spiritual forces of the world.

Original Jainism and Buddhism were only a new reformed form of Brahmanism or Hinduism

As noted above Jainism and Buddhism were the reformation movements of Hinduism. They were not a creed, but 'an

appeal for holier living in the bosom of the existing Hindu religion and society.' Both urged the common-folk to give up their vices and follies and inspired them to practise purity of conduct in daily life. Both took their stand on certain aspects of the pre-existing religious systems. Vardhamana Mahavir emphasised ascetism and self-mortification references to which are observed in the Vedas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishads. If the Upanishads recommend retirement into forests or hermitages to seek the highest divine knowledge, the *Smritis* lay emphasis on the *Sanyas* (renunciation and ascetism) as the last phase of a man's life. Similarly the basic doctrines of Buddhism as preached by Lord Buddha have their roots in the pre-existing Hindu Philosophy of the Sankhya system and the later Upanishads. The *Ashtangamarga* or the eight-fold path, enjoined by Lord Buddha for extinguishing the earthly miseries of soul, caused by the cycle of births and deaths, is only a code of general ethics and not the special creed of a new revealed and distinct faith.[1] Instead of inventing a complete new code of morality, the Buddha urged the people to follow the morals and virtues of the old rishis or saints. Except certain prohibitions and duties that he laid down for the monks and nuns, he adopted many articles of morality and pious customs of the Brahmanistic code.[2] We are told in the *Jatak* stories that Lord Buddha explained to the people repeatedly that true piety consists not in the performance of elaborate rituals or repetition of the complicated prayers but in leading a pious life. The Buddha did not lay down particular dogmas or special ritual for his followers. Even the doctrine of Ahimsa or non-violence was known to the people in the post Vedic period.

Again, it is wrong to say that both Jainism and Buddhism instituted new orders of monks and nuns. There existed before Jainism and Buddhism organised groups of the ascetics having their own codes of discipline as is evidenced from the Bhikshu Sutras. Both these reformation movements have been reputed for fostering the spirit of scientific inquiry and intellectual

1 *India through the Ages* by Jadunath Sarkar, p. 23.
2 *Manual of Indian Buddhism* by Kern, pp. 68-69.

discussion before accepting a belief blindly. But this was not a new development in the later Vedic period. We have references to some famous discussions and debates in the Upanishads. Raja Janaka used to initiate such intellectual discussions. Thus Jainism and Buddhism did not diverge from the main streams of Hinduism. In fact, they represent a significant phase in the religious life and cultural development, an important attempt to reform the spiritual life of India.

Circumstances which led to the rise of the new religious movements. The following are the conditions that favoured the rise and growth of new religious sects—Jainism and Buddhism—in this country.

1. *Burden of Ritualism.* By the sixth century B. C. the Vedic philosophy and religion had lost their original purity and had decayed in cumbrous, meaningless rituals. The rites and ceremonies were made so elaborate and expensive that they were no longer within the reach of the average man. People, therefore, groaned under the heavy burden of ceremonial rituals.

2. *Belief in Mantras.* If the Vedic religion had degenerated into ritualism, the spiritual outlook of the masses was burdened with superstition. The Vedic hymns were replaced by Mantras—formulæ which were supposed to possess divine powers. It was popularly believed that the recital of the Mantras could cure people of diseases, bring victory or defeat in wars, assure the prosperity of a state or the destruction of its enemies, silence the arguments of an opponent, even stop cough and promote the growth of hair, etc. In short the Mantras embodied in itself the universe. There was no phase of daily life, great or small, which could not but be affected by it for better or worse.[1]

3. *Sacrifices.* The Aryan belief in the divine power of sacrifice was much exploited by the priestly class. The actual killing and sacrificing of living animals and sometimes even human beings on certain ceremonial occasions created a feeling of revolt and contempt against such things in the minds of many.

The Aryan Rule in India by Havell.

Besides the great public ceremonies like *abhisheka* and *asvamedha* which drained the coffers of the state, there were many household rites for which the services of the Brahmans were necessary. These practices were very revolting. They turned the people against not only the Brahmanas, but also the system that they represented.

4. *Intellectual confusion due to the Theory of Karma, Jnana and Tapas Margas.* While people in disgust were eager to seek some solution for these ills, minds of many were stirred by complex problems of life and death and they strove to find a means by which the soul could be rescued from the unending miserable plight of life. Different means were advocated to attain this end. The priestly classes emphasised the efficacy of the performance of several ceremonies and sacraments (*Samskaras*) for a person who wished to obtain the cherished deliverance for his soul. This was styled as *Karma Marga.* But the Karma Marga was not regarded as the only means of salvation. Soon there developed the doctrines of *Tapas* or self-mortification as a means of self-realisation. The underlying idea was to enable a man to practise austerities in the forest, to subdue physical senses and develop the faculty of concentrating upon the realization of the Supreme Spirit. It was supposed that even the gods submitted to a person who subdued his passions and practised penance in the seclusion of forests.

While the *Karma* and the *Tapas Margas* were growing popular with the average man, the intellectual section of the people convinced that deliverance or *Moksha* could be attained by the *Jnana Marga* (true knowledge). They emphasised utmost the doctrine that "he who knows God, attains to God, nay, He is God." Soul in fact is an integral part of God. It is from God, in God, and of God and so it must merge in God. Its absorption in God was essential for man's spiritual salvation and eternal bliss. They, therefore, discarded the *Karma* and the *Tapas Margas.*

5. *The Supremacy of the Brahmans.* These conflicting views for the attainment of *Moksha* (deliverance) created unrest and confusion in the moral and spiritual world. Besides this intellectual confusion, there was existing the growing monopoly

of the unscrupulous and exacting priestly class. Their galling dominance disgusted the masses. They claimed to be the leading exponents of the Vedic tradition. There were endless and elaborate sacrificial rites which required their presence. They dominated every aspect of the life of the Aryans, right from birth to death. There was no escape from their guardianship and the priestly-craft. Even the work of the government was executed by them. The Kshatriya princes or rulers of the age were guided and supervised by the Brahman councillors who had monopolized all power and offices in the state. They enjoyed special privileges and powers and considered themselves superior over the rest of the people in society and they required people to have blind faith in Brahmanism. But people were no longer in a mood to accept this.

6. *The Caste-system.* The caste-system had developed its rigidity and vigour and its fetters were becoming tighter. Change from one caste to another was becoming impossible. The members of the low caste had to face a very miserable plight. They were treated with contempt. Moreover, the current usage which forbade the non-Brahman castes from taking to the ascetic life or following the *Tapas Marga* added to the resentment of the people against the prevailing Brahmanism.

Several leading teachers and scholars voiced the spirit of the time and founded religious sects, each of which sought to provide spiritual repast for all and find an easy, simple and practicable way to obtain deliverance for the soul from its unending pilgrimage. These sects or movements, according to the Pali works, were no less than sixty-two and according to the Jain texts their number was more than three hundred. Of these sects and movements, two alone—Jainism and Buddhism—survived, the rest had disappeared with the lapse of time.

Jainism[1]

Antiquity of Jainism. The origin of Jainism is shrouded in mystery. In the Rigvedic *mantras* there are clear references to *Rishabha* and *Arishtanemi*, two of the Jain Tirthankars, the former being the founder of Jainism. The story of *Rishabha*

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1 *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, Chapter VI ; *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, Chapter IV.

also occurs in the *Vishnu-purana* and *Bhagavat-purana*, where he figures as an *avatar* (incarnation) of Narayan. All this indicates that Jainism is as old as the Vedic religion, if not older.[1] The Jains believe that it is the outcome of the teachings of twenty-four *tirthankaras* or prophets or saints, all Kshatriyas, coming one after the other. The first twenty-two *tirthankaras* are so legendary in character that it is hardly possible to say anything about them. The twenty-third *tirthankar* named *Parsvanatha*, who lived 250 years before Vardhamana Mahavir, seems to have been a real historical personage. He was the son of king Asvasen of Banaras, but he abandoned the royal state in favour of spiritual life. His main teachings were non-injury, non-lieing (not to tell lies), non-stealing and non-possession. *Parsvanatha* seems to have left a well-formed organisation behind him. The parents of Vardhamana Mahavir and the members of his family were the followers of Parsvantha's religion and naturally Mahavir too was influenced by the Jain doctrines in his youth. The next and the last *tirthankar* was Vardhamana Mahavir himself.

Vardhamana Mahavir (599-527 B.C.). Vardhamana Mahavir was born in Kundagrama, a suburb of Vaishali (modern Muzaffarpur District, Bihar) in 599 B. C. in a rich Kshatriya family. His father Siddhartha was the head of a Kshatriya clan called the Jnatrikas ; and his mother Trisala was the sister of Chetaka, the most famous of the Lichchhavi prince and ruler of Vaishali. As king Bimbisara of Magadha had married Chellana, the daughter of Chetaka, Mahavir was related to the eminent ruling dynasty of Magadha. Vardhamana was educated to the highest prefection in all branches of knowledge and art and was married to Yasoda, had by her a daughter whose husband Jamali became the first disciple of Mahavir and subsequently the leader of the first schism of the Jain Church. In his thirtieth year on the demise of his parents, Vardhamana renounced the world, left his home and became an ascetic in the search of truth.

During one of his visits to Nalanda he made the acquain-

[1] *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, Chapter IV, p. 185.

tance of an ascetic called *Gosala Makkhaliputta*. He was so much impressed by Vardhamana that he attached himself to him but left him after six years to establish a new religious order called *Ajivikas*. For thirteen years Vardhamana lived the life of self-mortification, severe austerities and deep meditation. Then in the thirteenth year of his asceticism, on the tenth of Vaisakha, outside the town of *Jrimbhikgrama*, near the Parsvanath hills, he attained the "intuitive knowledge". At this supreme knowledge and the subsequent final deliverance from pleasure and pain, during his forty-second year of age Vardhamana became known as Mahavir, the great hero, or Jina (the conqueror who had subdued his passions) and his followers were named as *Nirgranthas* (free from fetters or bonds). For the next thirty years he moved from place to place and preached his doctrines in Kosala, Magadha and further east. He paid frequent visits to the kings, Bimbisara and Ajatashatru, who honoured him highly. He died at Pava (in the Patna district) at the age of seventy-two in 527 B.C. Some modern scholars prefer 468 B. C. as the date of his death. He was contemporary of Gautam Buddha and survived him by many years. He established a religious order which was open to all friars and nuns as well as lay men, both males and females. He accepted the teachings of Parsvanath as the basis of his faith.

Teachings of Mahavir.[1] Mahavir believed in dualistic philosophy and held that matter and soul are the only two ever existing elements. In other words, a man's personality comprises of material and spiritual natures. The former is perishable while the latter eternal and evolutionary. According to him, on account of Karma (the accumulated effect of the actions done in the past lives) the soul is in a state of bondage created by passions and desires collected through several previous births. It is by means of continued efforts through several lives that the *Karmik* forces binding the soul can be counteracted and the soul itself is rendered passionless. The disintegration of the

Refer *History and Literature of Jainism* by Barodia ; *The Heart of Jainism* by Mrs. S. Stevenson ; *Outlines of Jainism* by J. Jaini ; *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, Chapter VI by Radhakrishnan.

Karmik forces constitutes the final liberation of the soul (*jiva*). By *tapas* or severe austerities and self-mortification and discipline of the body the forming of the fresh *karmas* and their assimilation is prevented and the already deposited *karmas* are loosened and finally shaken away. Side by side with this decay of the *karmas* the intrinsic qualities of the soul get expressed more and more and the soul shines in full luminosity and in infinite greatness and glory which represents final liberation or *moksha* and then the soul becomes *Paramatman*, the pure soul, with infinite knowledge, power and bliss. (*The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, p. 207).

Certain ethical code is assigned both for a house-holder and a homeless monk. Since the aim of life is to attain salvation, one has to avoid evil *karmas*, then gradually prevent all kinds of fresh karmas and destroy the existing ones. For this purpose a householder is to observe five vows of non-injury (*ahimsa*), speaking truth (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), non-adultery (*brahmacharya*) and non-possessions (*aparigraha*). This comprises right conduct. Then he has to follow two more principles —Right faith and Right knowledge—the former means a belief in the Jinas and the latter means the knowledge of eventual liberation and of life in all existing things. More severe than this is the code laid down for a monk.

Mahavir did not believe that God created this world or exercises any control over it. According to him there is no creation of the world, no supreme creative spirit, nor there is any creator necessary to explain the nature of the world. God, according to him, is only the highest, the noblest and the fullest manifestation of all the powers latent in man (the most perfect man).

He regarded all objects, animate or inanimate, as endowed with various degrees of consciousness. They possess life and feel pain on the infliction of injuries. So the greatest emphasis is laid on the doctrine of Ahimsa or non-injury to any kind of living being, however low may be the state of its evolution.

He rejected the authority of the Vedas and objected to the Vedic rituals and the Brahman supremacy. He advocated, as noted above, a very holy, ethical and elevating code of life and

severe asceticism and extreme penance for the attainment of the *moksha* or the highest spiritual state. The modern Jainism embodies these very doctrines of Mahavir.

The Jain Church. Mahavir successfully founded the Jain Church. His severe asceticism and simple doctrines attracted many followers. He had eleven close disciples or apostles known as Ganadharas or "Heads of Schools". Only one of them, Arya Sudharman, survived Mahavir and became the Pontiff of the Jain Church after his death. Sudharman, the first *thera*, died twenty years after his master's death. His successor was Jambu who held the office for 44 years. Three generations of Pontiffs passed after him and during the reign of the last, Nanda of Magadha, the Jain Church was ruled by two *theras*, *Sambhutavijaya* and *Bhadrabahu*, who was the author of the *Kalp-sutra* of the Jains. Nothing in detail is known concerning the fortunes of the Jain Church for about 150 years. For the history of the Jain Church from its inception to the fourth or third century B.C. we are indebted to the Jain *Kalp-sutra* of *Bhadrabahu* who was the sixth *thera*, after Mahavir and was a contemporary of the Emperor Chandragupta Maurya. It is reported that he died 170 years after Mahavir's *nirvana*. The Jain *Kalpa-sutra* consists of three different sections—the section first contains the biographies of the twenty-three Jinas or Thirthankars who preceded Mahavir. The twenty-third Jina, *Parsvanath*, is said to have laid the foundation, upon which Mahavir, who followed him about 250 years after, sets up the Jain Church. The main part of the first section is the detailed biography of Mahavir. The second section of the *Kalpa-sutra* consists of the Theravali, a list of school (ganas) and their heads (ganadharas). As the list goes far beyond Bhadrabahu it seems that it was possibly written by others and not Bhadrabahu himself. The third section contains the Samachari or the Rules for the ascetics or Jain monks.

The First Jain Council and the Great Schism. The fourteen *Purvas*, the text-books of the old Join scriptures which Mahavir himself had taught to his Ganadharas, were perfected by *Sambhutavijaya* and *Bhadrabahu*. *Sambhutavijaya* is said to have died in the same year in which Emperor Chandragupta Maurya

ascended his throne. Towards the close of the fourth century B.C. a terrible famine, lasting for twelve years, broke out in South Bihar. When it led to the exodus of an important section of the Jains, headed by Bhadrabahu, to the Mysore region in the south many Jains remained in Magadha under *Sthulbhadra*, a disciple of *Sambhutavijaya*. They summoned a council at Patliputra about 300 B.C., to collect and revive the knowledge of the sacred texts which was passing into oblivion. Its result was the compilation of the twelve *Angas* that are considered as the most important part of the Jain canon. The followers of *Bhadrabahu*, on their return to Magadha, refused to acknowledge the canon as drawn up by their co-religionists in Bihar holding that the 14 Purvas were lost. Moreover there was already a wide gulf made between those who had emigrated and those who stayed in Magadha. The latter had become accustomed to wearing white garments and discarded Mahavir's teachings, whereas the former still continued going naked and strictly followed the teachings of Mahavir. This is how the first Schism split the Jain Church into the *Digambaras* (sky-clad or naked) and *Swetambaras* (clad in white).

The Second Jain Council at Valabhi (512 A.D.). With the lapse of time the canon of *Swetambaras* was reduced to a disorderly condition, and it was in danger of being lost altogether. Therefore, in 512 A. D., a Council was held at Valabhi in Gujrat, presided over by *Devardhi Kshamasramana*, a Ganadhara, to collect the sacred texts and write them down systematically. At this time the twelfth *Anga*, drawn in the first Council at Patliputra, had already disappeared leaving only the eleven *Angas* in the recension that has come down to us. They were written in Ardha-Magadhi.

During the centuries that followed, furthermore splits took place amongst both the sections—the Digambaras and Swetambaras—the most important of them being one that renounced idol-worship altogether and devoted itself to the worship of the scriptures. They are called *Terapanthis* among the Swetambaras and *Samaiyas* among the Digambaras. This sect came into existence not early than the sixteenth century. To-day the Jain Church with all its schisms is still existing and this religious

order founded by Mahavir is still preaching his teachings all over the country.

Ascendancy of Jainism.[1] The inscriptional and literary evidence seems to indicate us that in its earlier stages, the success of Jainism was more remarkable than Buddhism. The use of common dialect in place of Sanskrit by Mahavir and his preaching monks, the simple and homely moral precepts instead of subtle and unintelligible doctrines of God and Soul, the free ministration of spiritual truths to the masses, the activities of the Jain monks and royal patronage were the forces which helped in the spread of Jainism.

The incessant missionary efforts of a strongly organised religious order, that was left behind by Mahavir, made the animal sacrifices fall into disuse and non-violence became firmly established as a rule of life even amongst those classes of people who did not embrace Jainism. The followers of Mahavir gradually spread over the whole country. Jain monks were to be seen on the banks of the Indus when Alexander invaded India. According to the Jain traditions Udayin, the successor of Ajatsatru, was a devoted Jain. The Nandas were also probably Jains. In the first century B. C. Ujjain became a great centre of Jainism as is evidenced from the legends of the Jain saint *Kalakacharya* and *Gardabhilla* and his son *Vikram* of Ujjain. By the close of the fourth century B. C., a band of Jain monks under Bhadrabahu migrated to the Deccan and spread Jainism throughout the South with Sravana Belogla in Mysore as their central seat. A late inscription (900 A. D.) records that the summit of the Chandragiri (Mysore) is marked by the foot-prints of Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta Munipati (Emperor Chandragupta Maurya). There Jainism became very popular especially among the mercantile community.

Royal patronage was also bestowed upon Jainism. The great Măurya Emperor Chandragupta was its devout patron. As noted above, he himself had joined Bhadrabahu's march to the South as his disciple. A cave is dedicated to him and the hill on which it exists is known as Chandragiri after him. During

1 *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, pp. 221-224 ; *Hindu Civilisation* by Radhakumud Mookarji, pp. 241-243.

the second century B. C., king Kharvel of Kalinga (Orissa) professed Jainism, became its illustrious and renowned patron by setting up Jain images himself. In the Kushan period it flourished well at Mathura and was dominant in Eastern India in the times of Harsha. During the early centuries of Christian era, Mathura in the North and Sravana Belgola in the Deccan were great centres of Jain activities as is evidenced by a large number of inscriptions, images and other monuments discovered at both the places. From the fifth century many royal dynasties of the South such as the Gangas, the Kadambas, the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakuts patronised Jainism. Some of the Rashtrakut kings of Manyakheta, from the eighth to the tenth century, showed a special leaning towards Jainism. They were zealous patrons of .it and gave a great encouragement to the development of Jain art and literature. Many celebrated Jain poets flourished under them. *Jinasena* and *Gunabhadra* composed their *Mahapurana* at the time of king Amoghavarsha, whose great Jain work *Ratnamalika* became very popular with people of all sects. It is said that Amoghavarsha became a Jain monk in the latter part of his life. According to epigraphical evidence one of his successors, Indra IV, died of the Jain form of renunciation, self-mortification and asceticism. About 1100 A.D., Jainism gained great ascendancy in Gujrat. There the Chalukya king Siddharaja (1094-1143), the popular hero of the Gujrat legend and the ruler of Anhilwad, and his son Kumarapala were great patrons of the Jain sect. They openly professed Jainism and encouraged the literary and temple-building activities of the Jains in Gujrat. At the court of Kumarapala lived the famous Jain scholar Hemchandra who was the royal pandit and annalist.

During the Muslim period, Jainism continued to flourish without much molestation from the Muslim rulers of the country owing to the very peaceful ways and non-interference policy of the Jains. But their numbers began to decrease. They however received some patronage under the benign Mughal Emperor Akbar. But during this Muslim period, the Jains particularly increased in the states of Rajputana, where they occupied many important offices of the State including generalships and ministers. But the period that followed was of steady decline.

The Decline of Jainism—Causes of the Decline of Jainism. (1) A large number of unselfish workers, provided by the religious monastic order for preaching and proselytizing, fell in number. They were no longer enthusiastic in those activities. (2) The days of liberal royal patronage had passed away. (3) The lay community became split up by the internal divisions that made it impossible for them to combine for any solid religious or social work. (4) Caste distinctions and divisions, that were once brushed aside, were re-imposed and they became active with all their unflexible rigidity. This sapped the original vitality of the Jain community though it continued to survive in ever decreasing numbers. (5) In the meanwhile, counter reformation in favour of orthodox Hinduism set in and it had the effect of nearly exterminating Jainism.

The present day population of the Jains in India is nearly thirteen lakhs distributed all over the country, but they are predominently found in Rajputana, Gujrat, some districts of the South and Madhya Bharat. Mostly they are rich and prosperous traders and have founded and maintained many charitable institutions in the country such as dispensaries, dharmasalas (rest houses) and houses for animal protection. Now they are paying more attention to the reform of their society, the spread of education, revival of their faith, construction and repairs of the Jain temples and shrines and the publication of ancient Jain literature that has for centuries remained locked up in many manuscript stores at different places in Jain temples all over the country.

Contributions of Jainism to Indian Culture

1. *Jain literature and the growth of vernacular languages.* Though a small community, the Jains have played a very important part in the development of the languages of the country. Sanskrit and Pali have been the medium of sacred writings and preachings of the Brahmans and Buddhists respectively. But the Jains utilized the prevailing spoken languages of the different times at different places in the country for their religious propaganda and the preservation of the sacred knowledge. Their religious literature which is written in Prakrit is very vast. Thus they exercised a healthy and predominent influence on the

development of the Prakrit languages. They even gave a literary shape to some vernaculars for the first time. Mahavir himself preached in the mixed dialect called Ardha-Magadhi so that people speaking Magadhi or Sauraseni might understand him thoroughly. His teachings that were classified into twelve books called *Srutangas* are written in the Ardha-Magadhi language. Recently a very rich literature produced by the Jains has come to light. It preserves the form of the language as it was current prior to the evolution of the present day vernaculars, especially Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi. This literature is written in the language called *Apbhramsa.* It links the classical languages—Sanskrit and Prakrit on the one hand, and the modern vernaculars on the other and therefore its study is very significant from the philological point of view. The Jain thought and inspiration can be traced in the literature of the South. The earliest literature in Kanarese is of Jain influence. The Jains have also written some of their scriptures in Sanskrit. In fact they have produced a rich literature in Sanskrit, both narrative and philosophical, and works on technical subjects like grammar, prosody, lexicography and mathematics are also not wanting there.

2. *Jain Architecture.* The beauty of Jainism finds its high water mark during the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. In their early centuries they erected *stupas* like Buddhists in honour of their saints, with their accessories of stone railings, decorated gateways, stone umbrellas, elaborate carved pillars and abundant statues. Some examples of these that have been discovered at Mathura, Bundelkhand and Madhya Bharat are full of Jain statues. They belong to the eleventh and the twelfth centuries. The gigantic statues of *Bahubalin* called Gommatesvara at Sravana Belgola and Karkal in Mysore are among the wonders of the world. The former statue, seventy feet high, carved out of a mass of granite, standing at the top of a hill was erected in 984 by Chamundaraya, the minister of the Ganga King Rachamalla. The collossal reliefs carved out of rock near Gwalior in Madhya Bharat belong to the fifteenth century. The Jain caves with their relief works and statues at Udaigiri hills near Bhilisa in Madhya Bharat and Ellora in Andhra state are

the examples of excellent architecture and sculpture of the period. The Jains have also constructed cave temples cut in rocks, the earliest examples of which, belonging to the second century B. C., and later, exist in Orissa called as Hathingumpha caves. Other examples of different periods are still existing at Junagadh, Junnar, Osmanabad and other places. Many Jain places of pilgrimage such as the Parsvanath Hills, Pavapuri and Rajgiri in Bihar and Girnar and Palitana in Kathiawar have temples and other architectural monuments of different ages. The Jain tower at Chittor in Rajasthan is one of the best specimens of Jain architecture. The Jain temple at Mount Abu, in Rajasthan, belonging to the eleventh century, carries to its highest perfection the Indian genius for the invention of graceful patterns and their application to the decoration of masonry.

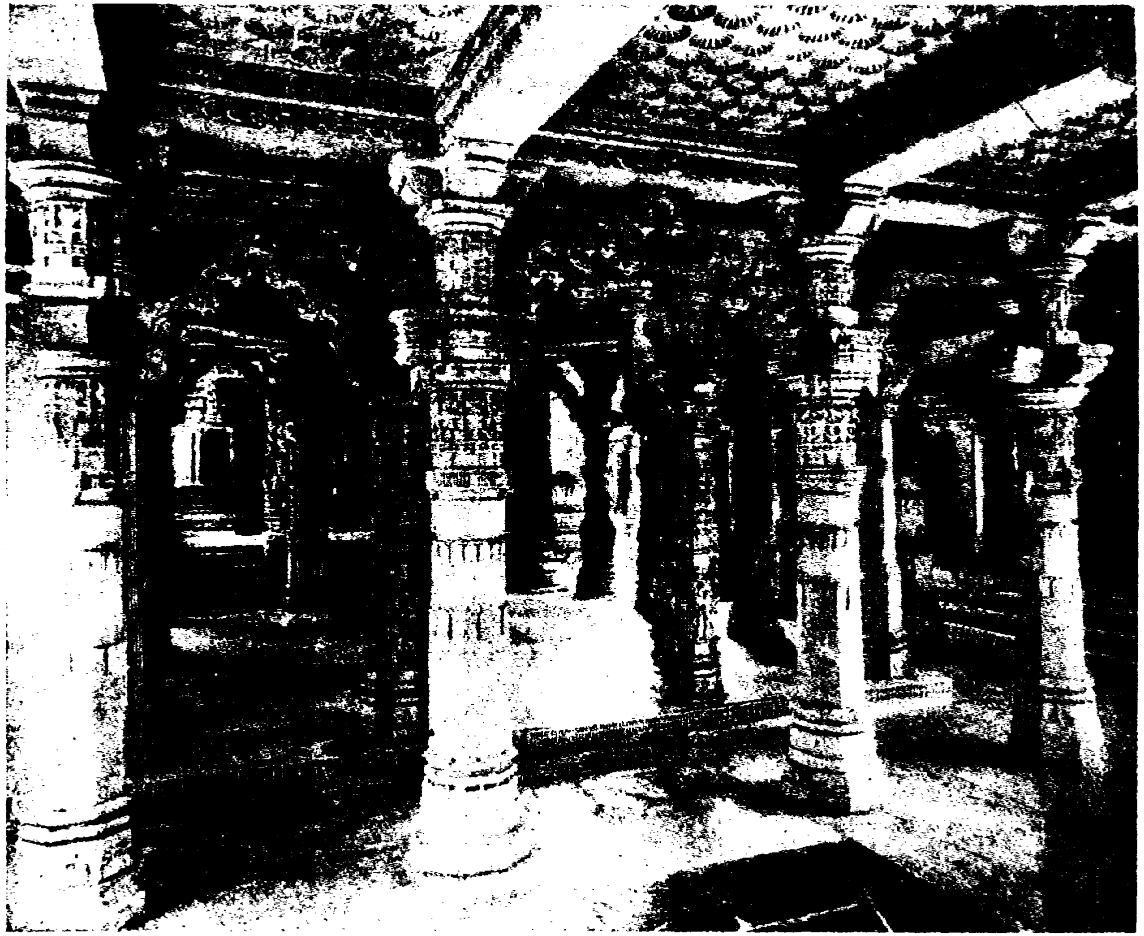
Conclusion. Traces of Jainism go far back into history and it is undoubtedly older than Buddhism if not Vedic religion. Though it neither became the dominant religion in India nor spread abroad, yet it has ever remained a powerful sect in the country. The orthodoxy of Jainism, its affinity to Brahmanism, its non-missionary spirit, and absence of its hostility with other rival faiths account for the fact that Jainism still flourishes in several parts of the country.

Buddhism[1]

Life of Gautam Buddha. Buddhism was the movement that gave the greatest shock to Brahmanism. It was started by Gautam Buddha who was a notable contemporary of Mahavir. He was the son of Suddhodhana, the chief of the Sakya clan of Kapilavastu in the Nepal Tarai. His mother was Maya, a princess of the neighbouring clan of the Koliyas. He was born about the year 566 B. C., in the village of Lumbini, a few miles from Kapilavastu. The site of his nativity is marked by the celebrated Rummindei Pillar of Asoka Maurya, containing an inscription dated 249 B.C. As Maya died in child-birth, Siddhartha was brought up by his aunt and step-mother, *Prajapati Gautami.*

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1 *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, Chapter IV ; *Buddhism* by T.W. Rhys Davids ; *Indian Philosophy* by Radhakrishnan, Vol. I, Chapters VII-XI ; *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I ; *Monthly Magazines of the Mahabodhi Society, 1952-53.*



Jain Temple, Mount Abu.

From his boyhood Siddhartha showed signs of contemplative turn of mind and a deep compassionate nature. The royal splendour failed to captivate the prince's heart even from his boyhood. Observing in his son a great indifference to worldliness, Suddhodhana married Siddhartha to a beautiful and accomplished Princess Yasodhara, the daughter of a Sakya noble, and surrounded the married couple with the choicest material of luxury and pleasure. But the prince was not happy at heart. The sight of an old man, a sick man, a dead body and an ascetic intensified his deep hatred towards the world and made him realise the hollowness of worldly pleasures. He was perturbed by the eternal problems of life, its suffering, disease, death and immortality and he felt powerfully attracted by the calm serenity of the passionless recluse. After the birth of a son named Rahula he left his home and kingdom in 533 B.C., at the age of twenty-nine as a wandering ascetic in search of Truth. This departure is known as the Great Renunciation.

For six continuous years he lived as a homeless ascetic, seeking instruction under two Brahman religious teachers and visiting many places including Rajgriha in the Patna district and Uruvila near Gaya. Finding no satisfaction there he practised the severest penances, the most rigid austerities and made fruitless efforts to find Truth. He then gave up penances, took a bath in the stream of the river Niranjana, modern Lilajan, and sat under a *pipal* tree at modern Bodh Gaya. Here he attained unto supreme knowledge and insight. Revelation came to him that the Great Peace was within his own heart and he must seek it there. This is known as the Great Enlightenment and since then he became known as the Buddha or the Enlightened One or Tathagata one who attained Truth). Then he proceeded to the Deer Park near Sarnath in the vicinity of Banaras where he gave his first religious discourse as a result of which five disciples joined him. For the next forty-five years he roamed about as a wandering teacher and proclaimed his gospel to the princes and peasants alike in Oudh, Bihar and some adjoining districts. Kings like Prasenjit of Kosala and Bimbisara and Ajatsatru of Magadha accepted his doctrines and became his disciples. He laid the foundation of the Buddhist Church or Order of Monks (*Sangha*). Preaching and delivering sermons for salvation and making con-

versations he at last died at the age of eighty in 486 B. C., at Kusinara, modern Kasia in the Gorakhpur district of the United Provinces.

Teachings of Buddha. Gautam Buddha never endeavoured to establish a new religion or creed. Neither he talked of codes and conventions, nor laws and rites. He indicated a new way of life—the virtuous path by treading which one could attain deliverence from births and deaths. He advocated not a set of doctrines or dogmas but a rational scheme of spiritual development. Simple goodness of spirit, deed and conduct is the basis of his teachings. He rejected the infallibility of the Vedas, condemned the bloody animal sacrifices, protested against the complicated, elaborate and meaningless ritual, challenged the caste-system and the priestly supremacy and denied or doubted the existence of a supreme creative spirit. It was, according to him, the individual exertion at self-improvement and virtuous life that mattered most. Self-culture is the key-note of his teachings. The virtuous path as suggested by him is a code of practical ethics that has a rational outlook. Buddhism, therefore, was more a social than religious revolution. It taught the code of practical ethics and laid down the democratic principle of social equality.

Buddha preached his followers the four "Noble Truths" concerning sorrow, the cause of sorrow, the remedy or destruction of sorrow and the way that leads to the destruction of sorrow. In other words, he pointed out four certainties—there is suffering in life, this suffering has a cause, this suffering could be removed by destroying its cause. The cause of the suffering is *Trishna* or desire for material enjoyments and earthly things. And it is this desire that is responsible for the births and re-births of man. When this selfish desire or craving for existence has ceased to act in man, he urged, it is only then possible for the individual soul to obtain *Nirvana* or freedom from this unending cycle of births and deaths. How to annihilate this craving or remove this desire is, therefore, the real problem before a man. Self-mortification, he argued, could never overcome *trishna* and bring about an escape from rebirth and subsequent suffering. Mere repetition of prayers, or sacrifices

or the chanting of the Vedic hymns was futile in cleansing the mind from gross desires. The desire, suggested Buddha, can only be removed by following the noble eight-fold path or *the Arya Ashtangmarga*. It consists of the following steps :—

1. *Right Views or Faith*—the knowledge of the four truths which Buddha enunciated in his first sermon ;

2. *Right Aspiration*—that require us to renounce pleasures, to bear no malice and do no harm to others ;

3. *Right Speech*—signifying that we should abstain from lieing, slander, abuse, harsh words and idle talk ;

4. *Right Action*—meaning that we should refrain from taking what is not given or abstain from carnal excesses ;

5. *Right Livelihood*—requiring us to abstain from any of the forbidden modes of living ;

6. *Right Effort*—consisting in suppressing the rising of evil conditions, in eradicating those that have arisen and in stimulating good states or conditions ;

7. *Right Mindfulness*—requiring us to look on the body and the spirit in such a way as to remain self-possessed and careful, overcoming both hankering and dejection ;

8. *Right Contemplation*—meaning to take the form of four meditations. It is the end and the crown of the eight-fold path.

This *eight-fold path* lies between the two extremes namely gross sensualism or vile pleasure-seeking on the one hand and the extreme asceticism or the severest self-mortification on the other hand. It teaches men how to live a moral and religious life. It is this path that ultimately brings, according to Buddha, final bliss or salvation or *nirvana*. Nirvana literally means the 'blowing out' or extinction of craving of the desire or *trishna* for existence in all its forms and the consequent cessation of suffering. It is not mere disappearance or extinction, but a tranquil state to be realised by a person who 'from all craving or want is free'. It is deliverance or freedom from re-birth. This may lead one to conclude that Buddhism teaches the doctrine of inaction, that is, cessation of activity, desiring little or doing little. But Buddhism does not teach inaction but non-doing of evil deeds. It teaches the doing of various kinds of good things. Buddha rightly prescribed *moral precepts* for his followers. He

laid stress on purity of conduct, truthfulnees, love and benevolence, obedience to parents and respect for the elders, non-drinking, charity and kindness and mercy to all living beings. He did not like flattery and once he rebuked a man who indulged in his praise. He valued the observation of the true path and hated the sin and not the sinner. The fact that once he preferred a meal prepared by a dancing girl Ambapali to the sumptuous banquet of the nobles at Vaisali bears testimony to the over-flowing mercy of his heart and his tender regard for the welfare and happiness of common people.

Another doctrine on which Buddha laid great emphasis is the *law of karma*, its working and the transmigration of souls. The condition of man in this life and the next, he argued, depends upon his own actions. Neither a sacrifice to gods can wash away sin, nor any prayer of any priest nor any prayer of any man can do himself or any other man any good. A man reaps what he sows. As a man acts, so shall he be. Every individual is the maker of his own destiny and that no god or gods could change it. We are for ever making our own moral world for good or ill. We can never escape the consequences of our deeds. We are born again and again to reap the fruits of our karma. This is the Law of Karma. If an individual sins no more, he dies no more ; and when he dies no more, he is born no more and thus he comes to live the life of Final Bliss.

Another prominent feature of his teachings is *ahimsa*. According to him the spirit of love is more important than good deeds. Non-violence towards life is recognised as an integral principle of his practical morality. But it is not given so much exaggerated importance as in Jainism. Though Buddha enjoined love and non-violence for all living beings, he permitted his followers to take meat under certain conditions.

In his religious teachings Buddha may be called an agnostic, because he neither accepts nor rejects the existence of God. He refused to be drawn into any theoretical discussion about God or nature of the soul. Whenever he was questioned about them, he either maintained silence or remarked that God or gods were also under the eternal Law of Karma. It seems that he was merely concerned with the deliverance of man from suffering, other things being beyond his purposes.

Buddhist Councils and Scriptures. When Buddha was on his death-bed, he said to his favourite disciple Ananda, "The truths and rules of the Order which I have set forth and laid down for you all—let them, after I am gone, be the teacher to you." Shortly after Buddha's death, therefore, the First Buddhist Council was held in 483 B.C. in Sattapanni cave near Rajagriha to compile the *Dharma* (religious doctrines) and the *Vinaya* (monastic code). There the five hundred monks representing different local *sanghas* assembled, and adopted authoritative canonical texts by dividing the teachings of Buddha into two Pitakas—the Vinaya and Dharma A few centuries later, about 90 B. C., these were reduced to writing in Ceylon in the Pali language in which we have them now.

A century later a dispute arose regarding the code of discipline as the monks of Vaisali wanted a relaxation of the rules in respect of ten points. The opinion was divided particularly as to whether the monks should not accept gold or silver from the people when offered. A second Council, therefore, convened in or about 383 B. C., at Vaisali (Bihar) which condemned the ten heresies. As the Vaisali monks stuck to their views no agreement was arrived at and the Council ended in a permanent Schism of the Buddhist Church into *Sthaviras* and *Mahasamghikas*. The former held the orthodox Vinaya and the latter were prochangers. The third General Council was held at Patliputra during the reign of Asoka, 236 years after the death of Buddha, under the chairmanship of a learned monk Moggaliputta Tissa to revise the scriptures. 'The Council accomplished two important results—firstly it made a new classification of the Buddhist canonical texts by the addition of a third Pitaka called the Abhidhamma Pitaka which contained the philosophical interpretations of the doctrines of the existing two pitakas.' As a result of this the sayings and discourses of the Buddha now came to be known as the Tripitaka. Secondly, 'the canonical literature was precisely, definitely and authoritatively settled so as to eliminate all disruptive tendencies, making all divisions within the church punishable'. The fourth Council was held during the reign of Kanishka in Kashmir under the leadership of the elder Vasumitra and the great scholar Asvaghosha. This Council was

not a general assembly but probably a gathering of only the Hinayanists of northern India. It decided certain controversial questions which arose out of some differences of opinion between the Sarvastivada teachers of Kashmir and Gandhara. The council also composed three large commentaries of the three Pitakas. They are known as Vibhashas.

The Buddhist scriptures known as *Pitakas* are divided into three sections, namely the *Sutta*, the *Vinaya* and the *Abhidhamma*. The first consists of five collections of religious discourses and sayings of Buddha and is, therefore, the most important part of the scriptures. The second, the *Vinaya Pitaka*, contains the rules of monastic discipline and the third *Abhidhamma Pitaka* contains the philosophical development of the teachings of Buddha. Every sect of Buddhism had a *Tripitaka* of its own. The fifth collection of the *Suttatripitaka* contains celebrated *Jatakas* or Buddhist birth stories. They were not so well-known in the second as in the fifth century B. C. The Jatakas belong to a class of literature which foreshadows the great epics of the Ramayan and the Mahabharat.

The Buddhist Sangha or Church

The Sangha. The Buddha had two kinds of disciples—monks (*bhikshu*) and lay worshippers (*upasikas*) ; the former were organised into the *Sangha* or congregation, the number of which had swollen with the spread of Buddhism. The membership of the Sangha or the Religious Order was open to all persons, male or female, above fifteen years of age and were free from leprosy, consumption and other infectious diseases. Persons who were in the services of the king or an individual, or who were in debt or had been branded as robbers or criminals were refused admission into the *Sangha*. But exceptions were made in the case of convicts, slaves or persons with bodily deformities. There were no caste restrictions. Thus, the Sangha or Buddhist Church formed a community of persons who were physically and morally fit to perform the noble service required of them. It was a systematic and thoroughly organised church which became a very powerful weapon of the spread of Buddhism. In due course it became one of the greatest religious corporations ever known in the world. In fact, later on it became a model for

church organisation of other religions. One of the primary causes of the rapid progress of Buddhism was the devoted and selfless service of the Sangha. The lay Buddhists led the life of house-holders and financially contributed to the maintenance of the Sangha.

Admission into the Sangha and its government. The ceremony of initiation into the Sangha was simple and plain. Whenever a new person, a man or a woman, desired to join the Order, he or she had to have his or her head shaved, put on a yellow robe and before the President of the local Sangha take the following oaths of fidelity to the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha.

1. I take refuge in the Buddha बुद्धं शरणं गच्छामि ।
2. I take refuge in the Dharma धम्मं शरणं गच्छामि ।
3. I take refuge in the Sangha संघं शरणं गच्छामि ।

Next he was to repeat the ten commandments of Buddha. Then he was required to attach himself to a monk who would give him certain preliminary training after which he was to present him to an assembly of monks and make a formal proposal for admitting him to the Sangha. When the permission was given, he was to be ordained as a monk. Henceforth, he was required to observe the internal discipline of the Sangha and abide by its rules for leading a life of poverty, chastity, devotion, austerity, simplicity and celibacy.

The Sangha was governed on absolutely democratic lines and was empowered to enforce discipline amongst its members. It had also the power to punish the erring members. Whenever a meeting of the Sangha was held, the members or monks took their seats according to their seniority. No assembly was valid unless at least ten monks were present though in border countries the quorum could in exceptional cases be reduced to five. Novices and women were not entitled to vote or to constitute the quorum. Every question was decided by those present, and the questions to be decided at a Sangha had to be formally presented.

The absentees could send their opinion on different points included in the business of the assembly and the various questions put forth in the meeting were decided according to the teachings of the Lord Buddha. The President was

empowered to see that the Sangha did not go beyond its jurisdiction. The ultimate authority was vested in the hands of the General Council of the Sangha which was convoked whenever any occasion arose. The interpretation of the sacred law also rested with the General Council. With a view to maintain a rigid observance of disciplinary rules, the monks in a *vihar* held every fortnightly a meeting where the rules were read out by the senior member and the breaches thereof, if any, were confessed by those present, and those confessing their guilt were made to undergo penitence, penance or punishment as the case might be.

Life of the Monks. The life of the monk and the nun was strictly governed by the laws and the ten commandments and there was no room for personal likes or dislikes. Property was held in common, and the possession of private property was strictly forbidden. The monks were forbidden the use of garlands, scents and other articles of personal decoration. They were not to indulge in liquor, flesh-food, dancing, singing or music ; they were required to sleep on a hard and narrow bed and to beg their food from door to door. It was a hard, puritanic life of destitution and stern morality. The regulations for the nuns were stricter. It was feared that if equality was promised to them, it might lead to indiscipline and immorality. Gautam Buddha was not in favour of ordaining women as nuns but he did so reluctantly at the repeated requests of his chief disciple Ananda.

The monks wandered for eight months in the year and preached in the neighbouring districts but were required to retreat into the *viharas* during the four months of the rains. During this period, known as *vasa*, the monks preached the Sacred Law to the people in the evening just like the 'Katha' system (narration of the stories) of the present day.

Absence of Co-ordinating Authority. The grave defect of the Sangha was its absence of a central co-ordinating authority. There was no central representative body of all the scattered Sanghas. This fostered the spirit of repeated schisms even on difference of minor points. This necessitated the frequent calling of the General Council where the points of difference were

reviewed and settled. An account of such Councils has already been given in the preceding pages.

The use of vernacular. Another striking feature of Buddhism and its Sanghas was that they discarded Sanskrit as it was unintelligible to the people at large and adopted the vernaculars of the people for their religious books and discourses. It was one of the important factors responsible for the rapid growth of Buddhism.

A review of Buddhism and Hinduism. It has often been argued that Buddhism was not a new religion. It was a revolt against the commercial rituals of the Brahmans and a strong protest against the caste-system. It laid before the masses a practical code of ethics which was already known to them. In fact it was a reform movement aimed at purging Hinduism of various ills. It was the old wine of Hinduism put in a new bottle. It is, therefore, not astonishing if there are many points of resemblance between Hinduism and Buddhism. As regards their *teaching*, Hinduism believes in God, Matter and Soul as three self-existent entities and considers God the Creator of the Universe. Buddhism has belief in Matter and Soul as two self-existent entities. God finds no room in the Buddhist thought of the world. It simply ignores the spirit of God as Creator.

But the agnostic attitude taken up by Buddha was not the first departure from the theology of the strict Hinduism. Kapil and Kanada, before Buddha, had taken up similar view.

The Hinduism considers the Vedas as divine and the Vedic rituals as essentials for salvation. It has deep faith in sacrifices. In fact the Vedas form the bed rock of Hinduism. But Buddhism denied the authority of the Vedas and had no faith in the efficacy of the sacrifices or *yajnas* and other elaborate rites and sacraments enjoined by them. The Vedic rituals are not regarded as necessary for salvation. Buddhism as a matter of fact was a revolt against ceremonial rites and sacrifices.

The final goal of life in both the religions is the same—to secure release from the cycle of births and deaths and to achieve salvation, *moksha* or *nirvana*. Both faiths have strong belief in the doctrines of Transmigration of the Soul and the Law of Karma. Gautam Buddha's teachings, in fact, were largely based

on the Brahman ideas of *Punarjanma*, *Karma* and *Moksha*. During his life Buddha counted many worthy Brahmans among his disciples. He forbade any attack on Brahmanism and never encouraged any conflict or schism with it. The principles of Hinduism as described in the Vedas are very complicated and are therefore unintelligible to the common people. The teachings of Buddhism, on the contrary, were very simple and brief and were within the comprehensive power of the masses. Hinduism is abstract and philosophical while Buddhism was practical and ethical.

As regards the *practices* of the two faiths, Hinduism believes in the performance of elaborate ceremonies, recital hymns and daily prayers. It lays emphasis on moral and virtuous life as leading to salvation. The ceremonies of the Hinduism are accompanied by oblations and slaughter of animals. Buddhism, on the contrary, advocated the principle of Ahimsa or non-injury to living beings. In fact Ahimsa formed the most important part of the Buddhist ethical code.

There is no personal element in Hinduism, while Buddhism introduced it in the form of Buddha as the saviour to be worshipped later in the form of images.

Hinduism has been imparting spiritual and religious instruction through Sanskrit. It has been the language of their scriptures. But the Buddhists have been administering spiritual knowledge through the spoken language of masses and they composed their scriptures in the language of the people.

Though the practical code of morality taught by Buddhism is not at all different from the ideal of Hindu life, yet a Brahman or a Hindu would discuss higher problems of life here and life hereafter. On the other hand, a Buddhist would lay emphasis only on the virtuous conduct in this life and on this earth.

With regard to *social and religious organisations* of the two faiths, the Hindu society is organised on the four-fold division of the castes in which the Brahmans enjoy supremacy. The caste-system and the dominance of the Brahmans are very striking features of Hinduism. Buddhism made no such distinction and treated all alike. It did not recognise the priestly class. The Buddhist society was democratic in which a low-

born had the same privileges as a high-born, provided his moral conduct justified this privilege.

Hinduism has no Church or regular religious order of monks and nuns. Buddhism instituted such order. It was congregational. Viharas and Sanghas played a very important part in Buddhism. Due to the missionary spirit of the Sanghas, Buddhism has been very dynamic and is, therefore, followed by one-quarter of the human race. Hinduism, on the other hand, is never marked by a missionary spirit and it never sought converts. Hence, it has always been static.

In social outlook Hinduism did not possess the spirit of adaptability. But Buddhism has been very flexible and adopted itself to the needs of the countries to which it travelled.

Jainism and Buddhism

Jainism and Buddhism resemble together in many respects. Both of them have been protestant religious movements against the corruptions of Hinduism. They were the products of the same religious ferment that prevailed in the sixth century B. C. They were the off-shoots of Hinduism. In their search for truth they did not strike a new path but followed the old one of Hinduism. The goal that they placed before them was the same as that which Hinduism strove to attain, namely salvation or *moksha* from the cycle of births and deaths. Therefore, both of them accepted two famous doctrines of Hinduism—Karma and transmigration of souls as the indispensable factors of the attainment of salvation. They differed from the orthodox Hinduism in their belief in the automatic and relentless working of the Law of Karma. Jainism and Buddhism both held that the Law of Karma is above all creatures whether men or gods ; and even God or gods cannot alter the course of this law. Hence the Brahmanic practice of pleasing the gods by sacrifices and the Vedic rites was of no avail in attaining moksha or salvation. Moksha could be attained by a person by his own virtuous deeds and not by the meditation of God or gods who are themselves subject to the Law of Karma. So, both Jainism and Buddhism denied the Brahmanic ceremonies, rejected the authority of the Vedas, abhored and condemned the blood sacrifices and ignored the belief in God as the creator of the Universe.

Both Jainism and Buddhism advocated the virtuous and holy life and abstention from sinful thoughts, actions and injury by word or deed to any living being. Both laid emphasis on the doctrine of Ahimsa—non-injury to animals. In this matter the Jains went even a step further than the Buddhists.

Both Mahavir and Buddha preached their religions in the common language of the people, denounced the caste-system and advocated equality of men and women. Unlike Hinduism each had a well-organised Sangha of devoted missionaries and each depended ont he support of the monastic order free from worldly tangles.

As the founders of both Jainism and Buddhism were the kshatriya princes, drawing their inspiration from the teachings of the Upanishads, much of their success was due to the patronage of the kshatriya princes and kings.

But in many other respects both differed fundamentally from each other. The Jains gave laity a very prominent place in their order while the Buddhists relied mainly on their monastic order. The *Nirvana* of the Buddhists differed fundamentally from that of the Jains. The *Nirvan* of the former was escape from existence, whereas that of the latter is escape from body. The Jains believe in rigorous asceticism and approve self-mortification which was discarded and condemned by Buddhism strongly. The doctrine of Ahimsa, believed in by both, was carried by the Jains to a far greater extent than ever contemplated by the Buddhists. The Jains believed in the principle of life in the vegetable kingdom too. Buddhists emphasised the non-existence of the soul as a permanent entity, whereas Jains believe that not only animate but inanimate things also possess souls.

Jainism even today retains many Brahmanic practices and ceremonies and a modified form of caste-system which was completely discarded and condemned by the Buddhists. Buddhism soon spread outside India and is still followed by one-quarter of humanity ; but Jainism never went beyond India and the number of its followers has been very limited.

Buddhism and Jainism, as mentioned above, have their roots in Hinduism. 'They are mere off-shoots of Hinduism, arising

in protest of some of the corruptions of the latter, discarding its evils, but retaining its fundamental principles,' like the Law of Karma, Rebirth, Ahimsa etc.; the popular mythology is not discarded by them. Brahma, Indra and other gods figure in both Buddhist and Jain stories. Many of the old doctrines are presented merely as new ways of attaining the goal of liberation. But Jainism, so to say, is a via media between Hinduism and Buddhism.

Schools of Buddhism. A century after Buddha's death Buddhist Sangha was divided into two schools, namely the *Mahasanghikas* and the *Sthavira-Vadins.*

It was the result to popularize the religion of Buddha through *Jatakas* and *Avadanas.* The progressive section which advocated less stringent disciplinary rules was called as the Mahasanghikas, while the conservative section which clung to the original idea of strict monastic life and rigid disciplinary laws known as the *Thera* or *Sthavira-Vadins.* To interest the laity in Buddhism, Mahasanghikas, a progressive section of the Buddhist monks, began to preach the doctrines of *paramitas* (transcendent virtues of charity, forbearance etc.). They set on foot a movement against the austere form of monk-life envisaged in the Pali Pitakas. This movement brought out Buddhism from the secluded cloisters to the towns and villages and converted it from a religion of the recluses to that of the masses. An average man now could aspire to get the benefit of the religion by constructing a *chaitya* or an image of Buddha and by worshipping it with flowers and other offerings. While the monks carried on their austere religious practices within the cloisters, the people worshipped Buddha and expressed their devotion for the god (because to them Buddha was no longer a saint) by constructing huge massive monuments and carving on them scenes from the life of Buddha. This ornate and emotional aspect of Buddhism, known as popular Buddhism, began to appear from the second century B. C. onwards and flourished during the reign of Emperor Asoka. More doctrinal changes were introduced into this popular Buddhism during the reign of Emperor Kanishka in first century A.D., after the fourth General Council of the Buddhists. This led to the rise

of the Mahayan or Northern Church of Buddhism. It was partly due to attempts of learned Brahman converts to Buddhism like Asvaghosha to reconcile Buddhism with Hinduism and partly to the fact that in North-Western India a number of new influences—Greek, Christian, Zoroastrian and Central Asian—had crept in. When Buddhism became the religion of the foreign invaders, it entirely lost its original character. Buddha ceased altogether to be a dead teacher and became a living Saviour God, incarnate like Rama and Krishna, for the salvation of the human race. The Hindu theory of Avatars or incarnations was adopted by Buddhism and the historical Gautama Buddha was regarded as merely the latest of a series of incarnation of the Adi Buddha or Primeval Spirit and his image was worshipped. Side by side there developed a number of gods and goddesses with elaborate descriptions of their features and characters. This was Mahayanism, a new form of Buddhism. In addition to the worship of Buddha as incarnation of Adi Buddha, 'Mahayanism declared that with the attainment of Nirvan, man will not return to this earth again and therefore he is incapable of doing any work, not even service to humanity. But those individuals who have not yet attained Nirvan, but striving to attain it, can do real good to the suffering world. The Bodhisatva, who is such an individual preparing through several lives to attain the state of Buddha or the completely Enlightened One, is the real benefactor of humanity.' The Mahayanism, therefore, emphasised the Bodhisatva ideal more than even that of Buddha. Though the Bodhisatva idea known to the Buddhists even before, the Mahayanism gave it a prominent position and made it a definite cult. A great exponent of Mahayanism was Nagarjuna who lived in the second or third century A.D. Among other great exponents were Vasubandhu, Asanga, Dingnaga and Dharmkirti. In course of time Mahayanism was also sub-divided into many sects such as *Sunyavada*, *Vijnanvada* etc., each with a philosophy of its own.

This Mahayan or the great vehicle differed in many essential points from the old real Buddhism called Hinyan or the lesser vehicle. The introduction of the worship of the Buddha and

of the Bodhisatva, a novel feature of Mahayan, was in clear contrast to Hinyan. Another point of contrast is that whereas the Hinyanists relied more on personal efforts at good virtuous living as the means to attain salvation, the Mahayanists relied more and more on the devotion to and the worship of the Buddha as a way to salvation or nirvan and therefore they introduced image worship with its attendant rituals, ceremonies, charms and formulæ. 'Faith replaced reason and devotional worship took the place of self-efforts.' Another significant point of contrast between the sects is that the canonical texts of Hinyan were all written in Pali, those of Mahayan were in Sanskrit.[1]

The Growth of Buddhism. Within a very short period Buddhism spread all over India. Before the Buddha had passed away, he had the satisfaction to see that the people and the princes of such mighty kingdoms as Magadha, Kosala and Kausambi and those of the republican states of the Sakyas, the Vajjis, the Mallas etc., embraced Buddhism and the whole of Middle India or Majjhimadesa, as it was then known, was dotted with the Buddhist monasteries or Viharas. Under Asoka and Kanishka it was made the state religion. It existed in a flourishing condition up to the end of the seventh century A.D., as testified to by Yuanchwang and Itsing. The great monasteries of Nalanda were the significant centres of Buddhism. In the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries A.D., it still continued under the patronage of the Pala Kings of Bengal and Bihar. It was in this Pala period that many Indian teachers went to Tibet where they strengthened Buddhism and translated thousands of Buddhist works into Tibetan language. The rulers of Kanyakubja in the north-west of the Pala kingdom were also patrons of Buddhism. They constructed magnificent Buddhist monasteries and offered magnificent gifts to them. The Buddhist usages of the ninth and tenth centuries have been found in Mahoba, Ellora, Nasik and many other parts of the Deccan. Unfinished Buddhist cave temples are found in Aurangabad and other places. Thus, until the twelfth century, Buddhism, although internally weakened and corrupted, was

Early History of India by N.N. Ghosh, p. 59.

prevalent in India. Then it declined and disappeared in the Muslim period, though it continued to flourish outside India.

It was in the third century B. C. when the Emperor Asoka became its great devotee, that Buddhism began to spread in the territories outside India. The Buddhist missionaries converted Ceylon and Burma to their faith. They then reached Mesopotamia and Syria in Asia Minor, Egypt in Africa and Macedonia in Europe. In the same period Buddhism spread in Central Asia and according to a tradition, a son of Asoka successfully established his own kingdom in Kutch and its neighbourhood and spread Buddhism there. According to another tradition Buddhism reached China at a very early period. The translations of Buddhist works in Chinese language were made by Kasyapa Matanga who went to China as early as 56 A.D. Buddhism was introduced into Korea in 372 A.D., whence it reached to Japan in 538 A.D. In Indo-China Buddhism was already taken before the third century A.D., and in Tibet 640 A.D.[1]

The factors responsible for the spread of Buddhism in India and abroad are as follows :

1. *Simplicity of Buddhism.* Buddhism was a revolt against the highly complex system of sacrifices and rituals that prevailed in India, in the 6th century B.C. The social and religious conditions of that time made the people disgusted with them. The Brahmans had fallen from their ideals. Superstition had penetrated into the very vitals of the society and self-mortification and severe austerities, penance, sacrifices and recitation of *Mantras* had rendered Brahmanism very unpopular. Buddhism with its code of practical ethics came as a deliverance from such a tyranny. Simplicity and nobility of the teachings attracted the masses who joined Buddhism in large numbers. By freeing the religion of all complicated and expensive ceremonials, the Buddha made it accessible to the poor. Laying stress on practical morality in daily life he made the life of the people healthier and happier. Buddha's rational view in regard to the ultimate problems of life and universe appealed to the masses most.

The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. I, p. 297.

2. *Its Spirit of Equality.* The spirit of Buddhism was very liberal and accommodating. It did not believe in the caste-system or in the supremacy of the priestly class. It treated all men as equals recognising the dignity of man as man. Caste, according to him, was no obstacle to the highest truth ; the door of his religion was open to all, the high and the low, the learned and the unlearned, the Brahmans and the Sudras. By abolishing caste-distinctions and introducing democratic principles, Buddha raised the status of the lower caste people who in accepting Buddhism secured their social and spiritual liberty.

3. *Its Power of Adaptation.* Buddhism was a highly elastic faith and could easily adopt itself to the needs of all countries. With a few modifications it could suit every place. This accounts for its wide spread beyond the confines of India.

4. *The Use of Popular Language.* Hinduism was couched in Sanskrit language which was all Greek and Latin to the masses. The Buddha, on the other hand, explained his simple doctrines in the language of the people. His practical discourses, preached in the popular language, made a strong appeal to the man in the street and paved the way for national consciousness. The people were attracted by the fact that the great spiritual truths were made available to them in the language of the day and free of extortionate fees which the Brahmans used to demand from them for similar services.

5. *The Magnetic Personality of the Buddha.* 'The magnetic personality of the Buddha worked as a touch-stone for all who came into his contact.' The impeccable logic with which he answered the arguments of the learned conservative priests and the intense human feeling which inspired his teachings convinced easily priests, princes and poor people alike. His strict virtuous life, his irrefutable logic, his forceful arguments and powerful reasoning, and his sweet, fluent and persuasive speech enabled him to win over his Brahman opponents in open debate and discussion. Consequently many of his converts were Brahmans like Maha Kasyapa, Sariputta, Moggollana, and others. They recognised the futility of the sacrifices and appreciated the Buddha's interpretation of the Law of Karma.

6. *The Royal Patronage.* Inspite of all these factors Buddhism might have remained only a petty sect of Hinduism, had not the royal patronage come to its help. Being himself a man of royal birth, the Buddha was readily listened to by the ruling chiefs and several aristocratic families and tribes accepted his teachings. Then the royal patronage of Asoka and Kanishka contributed to the success of Buddhism in India and its diffusion abroad. Asoka who left no stone unturned in raising it to the dignity of a state religion spread it far and wide. His son Mahendra and daughter Sangh Mitra became Buddhist missionaries and were very successful in carrying Buddhism to Ceylon. Asoka engraved the tenets of his faith on pillars and rocks so that where the human voice could not reach, these stones might teach the people and serve as a beacon of light for them. Thus Asoka's activities made Buddhism a dominating religion in India. This royal patronage was continued by other ancient kings like Milinda, Kanishka and Harsha. During their periods great stimulus was given to the missionary work of Buddhism. This spread Buddhism in different corners of India.

7. *The Buddhist Sangha.* Perhaps the greatest factor that contributed to the popularity and the growth of Buddhism was the missionary activities of the Buddhist Sangha. The Buddhist missionaries became the centres of light and learning. They were all selfless, devoted, able-bodied men of considerable moral and spiritual stamina. They had the injunctions from the Buddha "to be always on the move". "Go ye Bhikshus and wander," said the Buddha, "for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, out of the compassion for the world ; for the good, for the gain, for the welfare of gods and men. Let not two of you go the same way." Thus the Buddhist missionaries were made to carry the noble message of deliverance from door to door, and deliver it free to rich and poor, high and low alike. Even when the Bhikshus rested in a *vihar* during the rainy season, they did not while away their time. They utilised this period in giving moral and spiritual discourses to the inquisitive persons who used to collect around the *viharas.* A Buddhist *vihar* was thus a centre which 'provided all laymen of the town with a free education in moral and spiritual truths

calculated to bring more happiness and contentment to the human soul'. Moreover, the Buddhist Bhikshus preached common ethics which were within the comprehension of an average man, whereas the Brahman Sanyasis or teachers or priests strove to unfold subtle philosophical problems and draw upon their scriptures in the Sanskrit language that was beyond the comprehensive power of a man in the street.[1]

Thus, the Buddhist monks and the nuns with their lives and high ideals, with their zeal and selfless efforts stirred the hearts of the commonfolk to the very depths and carried on the work of the propagation of Buddhism efficiently and successfully.

8. *Lack of Serious Rivals.* In the field of missionary work, Buddhism had no serious rival sects. Hinduism was not marked by a missionary spirit, while Christianity and Islam had not yet made their appearance. Buddhism was thus left free to flow into the direction it liked.

The Decline of Buddhism

Although Buddhism gained great popularity with the masses, it was never able to destroy Hinduism which continued to exist even when its rival Buddhism was at its height. Later on, when Buddhism deteriorated, Hinduism rose to a new vigour under the patronage of the Hindu monarchs especially the Guptas and Rajputs and Buddhism began to decline. This process continued for centuries together till Hinduism recovered. The old strength, vigour and status of Buddhism completely disappeared from India, the land of its birth. It was eclipsed by Hinduism. The following causes contributed to this decline and eclipse.

1. *The Inherent Defects of Buddhism.* Buddhism had started as a simple faith. But with the lapse of time it had become austere and formal. Its strict discipline in due course became a troublesome burden on its followers who now craved for an escape from it. Besides, Buddhism ignored God, while its rival Hinduism appealed to Him with all the colour and mystery associated with the supernatural beings. The atheistical tendency in Buddhism turned the people against it.

2. *Deterioration of Buddhism.* With the lapse of time those very features of Brahmanism were introduced into Buddhism

Longman's History of India, p. 54.

against which its founder Gautam Buddha raised his voice of protest. The rise of the Mahayanists led to the worship of the Buddha and Bodhisatvas and created many more of the latter, such as Avalokitesvara, Manjusri and others. The images of Buddha and many new Bodhisatvas were worshipped everywhere and people built great temples to them endowed with considerable wealth and ornaments. Then many separate gods and goddesses were also introduced and were worshipped by Buddhists.

Many unworthy persons who entered the Buddhist monasteries began to relax many rules and sought sanctions to indulge in many vices. Therefore, they introduced some practices which were contrary to the ethics of Buddhism and composed many books on their own doctrines. This phase of Buddhism is known as Tantric or Vajrayana Buddhism. It advocated many esoteric practices in which women and wine were most essential things. The followers of Vajrayana or Tantric Buddhism claimed psychic powers which they obtained by constant mystic practices. These psychic powers began to pass for spiritualism. The introduction of esoteric practices, demonstration of psychic powers, sorceries and incantations along with the worship of hundreds of gods and goddesses housed in temples and monasteries so completely changed the Buddhism of Sakya Muni that by the close of the twelfth century no trace of the old religion was left and mysticism and Tantricism replaced it. Thus the prevalence of Vajrayan, which sapped the foundation of Buddhism by destroying all moral strength and making it rotten to the core, contributed considerably to the disappearance of Buddhism.

3. *Degeneration of the Sangha.* In the course of time many vices grew up in the Buddhist Sangha. The introduction of Tantric Buddhism helped to destory the ethical fervour of the monastic order. Apart from this, as the rich and poor alike vied with one another in showering their gifts of gold, silver and jewels on the Buddhist monasteries, the coffers of the Sangha held more wealth than the treasures of kings. This bred a life of luxury and comfort in the monasteries poisoning the springs of spiritualism. The ten commandments of the Buddha

were frequently infringed and the life of renunciation disappeared. As corruption crept into the Sangha and the Viharas the Buddhist monks who were the leaders of the whole Buddhist community lost their reputation for good character and other admirable qualities. The whole foundation of their prestige and power vanished and consequently Buddhism lost its greatest engine of propaganda—the Sangha.

4. *Loss of Royal Patronage.* Buddhism had quickly risen to the status of a world religion through the remarkable enterprise of its royal devotees. The Buddhist monarchs like Asoka, Kanishka and Harsha had mobilized the resources of the state in the cause of Buddhism. After their death state patronage was withdrawn from Buddhism. Many Buddhist monks and followers thus lost their support. They migrated to other frontier countries of India like Nepal, Tibet etc. Consequently its downfall was hastened.

5. *The Assimilative Powers of Hinduism.* Hinduism has a remarkable power of absorbing many other religious forms. In fact, it is a synthetic religion containing many virtues and doctrines found in other religions. It possesses enough capacity to imbibe alien religious beliefs, doctrines and cultures. In due course Brahmanism incorporated the best of Buddhism. It was on account of this inherent assimilative power of Hinduism that foreigners like the Huns and Sakas were readily absorbed into the Hindu-fold. Consequently, 'Hinduism continued to gain adherents, while Buddhism declined in numbers, due to its austerity and seclusiveness.'

6. *Brahmanic Revival.* The great setback to Buddhism came from the Brahmanic revival. With the advent of the Gupta rulers to political power the revival of Brahmanical Hinduism, which had already commenced, gained a considerable momentum. The Gupta Emperors were zealous Hindus, and patronised liberally the Brahmans, their religion and their language—Sanskrit. Under their active royal support Brahmanism regained its old enthusiasm, and led a strong offensive against Buddhism. From the eighth to the eleventh centuries the Rajput princes who governed the most of the Northern India were not favourably inclined to Buddhism. Being a warrior race the

creed of non-violence did not appeal to them. They joined the power-cult or *Shakti-puja* of Hinduism. The notion that Sankaracharya, a great Brahman thinker and celebrated scholar, led anti-Buddhist crusade has been now disproved.[1] However during the revival of Brahmanism, the Brahman thinkers demonstrated openly the superiority of Hinduism. As a result of this Hinduism began to recover its popularity and Buddhism began to lose its hold over the masses.

7. *The Muslim Invasions and their Persecution.* When Buddhism was growing rotten to the core, the Turks invaded the country, destroyed great Buddhist temples and monasteries, including those of Nalanda. Had the monasteries and temples possessed less wealth, possibly, the Turks would not have destroyed them, since the Turks' main motive was to obtain their wealth. Besides, on account of their special dress and lonely dwellings, outside the cities and towns, the monks and their monasteries were conspicuous enough to be singled out by the Muslim invaders for attack and persecution. This sounded a fatal blow to Buddhism.

The loss of royal patronage, the assimilative power of Hinduism and the Brahmanic revival under the Guptas have been contributory causes for the disappearance of Buddhism in this country. But the real cause lay in the deterioration, degeneration and rottenness that overtook Buddhism and Buddhist Sangha in the last stage of their existence which, however, coincided with Muslim invasions and persecutions. But to state that Buddhism disappeared because of Muslim persecution alone is wrong. So great was the decay of Buddhism and so disgraceful became the monastic order that Buddhism succumbed while Brahmanism, being equally under the persecution of the Muslim conquerors in the same period, survived and later on flourished well. Under Muslim persecution many Buddhist monasteries and monks were destroyed and many were forced to flee from India to the safer border countries such as Nepal and Tibet. Buddhists in India were thus abandoned and left without guides. In course of time some of them, who had relatives and caste people of their own in the Brahmanism,

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[1] *Early History of India* by N. N. Ghosh, p. 64.

returned to that religion and others who were regarded inferior or suffered from social and economic tyranny of the higher castes were induced to embrace Islam. Thus somewhere in the fourteenth century Buddhism disappeared from the Northern India. Though it lingered on for a few years in some other places but without back-bone it was not able to stand and consequently the disappearance of Buddhism from the land of its birth was complete.[1]

8. *Revival of Buddhism in India.* Recently an earnest attempt to revive Buddhism in India has been made by the Maha Bodhi Society of India founded by the late Devamitta Dharmapala. The Mulgandhakuti Vihara of Sarnath near Banaras has been restored by a magnificent building. Rest houses for Buddhist monks and pilgrims, a hospital, a school and a library building have also been constructed there. Sarnath where the Buddha had delivered his first sermon and where Asoka had immortalised that event by constructing a Vihar or monastery and setting up an inscribed pillar is again humming with life as the headquarter of the Buddhist organisation in India after a lapse of many centuries. New monasteries or Viharas have been constructed at Kusinara, Sravasti and Calcutta. A Buddhist rest house for pilgrims has been built at Bodh-Gaya near the Maha Bodhi temple. Now, many branches of the Maha Bodhi Society have been started in different places of India.

Contribution of Buddhism to Indian Culture. The progress of Buddhism excercised considerable influence in shaping the various aspects of Indian life ; cultural, social, religious and political. Its contributions to Indian culture are as follows :—

1. *Easy, Intelligible and Popular Religion.* Buddhism gave a popular religion, without any complicated, elaborate and unintelligible ritual such as could be performed only by a priestly class. It consciously set itself to appeal to the masses, and it wonderfully and quickly succeeded in winning their hearts by its simplicity, emotional element, easy ethical code,

[1] Refer to the arguments advanced by N.N. Ghosh in his book *Early History of India* where he discusses the downfall of Buddhism, pp. 60-67.

use of popular language, popular methods of teaching by means of parables, and worship and prayer in congregation. It introduced a personal element in religion in the form of a human saviour.

2. *Noble Ethical Code.* The Buddha prescribed a severely practical and simple code of ethics for his followers. In addition to the noble moral code such as charity, purity, self-sacrifice, truthfulness and control over passions, he emphasised love, compassion, equanimity and non-injury to living creatures in thinking, speaking and doing. Though the Upanishads had advocated these virtues before the rise of Buddhism, they did not raise the tone of public morality to such a high pitch as the Buddhism. Then, the Mahayan sect of Buddhism placed before the people a noble ideal of service in the form of *Bodhisatva.* Besides these, Buddhism explained to the masses that man is the architect of his own destiny, not any god or gods. This led to the rise of individual religion in place of Brahmanism.

3. *The Influence on Hinduism.* In the domain of Hinduism of the later period there is unmistakable evidence of the influence of Buddhist thought and ethics. Though Buddhism never dislodged Brahmanism from its high pedestal, yet it left on it a permanent impression of its own. The doctrine of Ahimsa so strongly stressed, devoutly preached and sincerely practised by the Buddhists, was incorporated bodily in their teachings by the Brahmans of later days. This emphasised respect for life in all forms and minimised the spirit of sacrifices which involved loss of life. Buddhism thus exercised humanizing effect on Hinduism. This indirectly led to the rise of that particular phase of the Bhagwat religion which completely absorbed the doctrine of *Ahimsa.*

4. *The Monastic System.* Another new thing given by Buddhism was the monastic system or the organisation of religious devotees in disciplined communities or orders. The institution of the *Ramdvara* and the *Matha* (organised brotherhoods of Sadhus) is a feature which was introduced in the Hindu society as a result of its contact with Buddhism. Before the advent of Buddhism old men used to retire to hermit ages in the forests to end their remaining days in solitary

recluse and lonely contemplation. But the grouping of religious devotees into a fraternity of monks, obeying a common head, following a common code of disciplinary rules and living together under a common roof, did not exist. Then, the Buddhist sangha for the first time made systematic organised attempts in India to teach simple code of ethics for better spiritual life of the masses. In due course the Buddha Viharas became the first centres of free education in India. There the commonfolk received their lessons on moral and spiritual truths.

5. *The Image-worship.* The practice of worshipping personal gods, making their images and erecting temples in their honour was adopted by the Hindus in imitation of the Mahayan Buddhists. These elements did not form a part of the Aryan religion which consisted mainly of sacrifices on open altars in the open air.

6. *Development of the Literature of the spoken language.* As Buddhism was intended for the masses it made popular the spoken languages of the people. Lord Buddha himself preached in the language of the masses and so did the Buddhist monks and nuns. It was in the Buddhist vihars or monasteries that the beginnings of the vernacular (*Prakrit*) literature were made which later on developed into an extensive body of literature. Buddhism thus fostered the growth of a vast and varied literature in the popular language of the people.

7. *The Buddhist Art.* The finest contribution of Buddhism to Indian life was made in the realm of architecture and sculpture. Before the advent of Buddhism art was a hand-maid of religion. Consequently it did not progress much during the Vedic Age. Architecture was mainly confined to the construction of *mandapas* or *yajna-shalas*, *pillars* and *altars* or *yajna vedies* for the purpose of the sacrifices. But Buddhism gave a powerful impulse to religious architecture. To-day almost every museum in the world possesses relics of Buddhist art. Under the patronage of Buddhism all branches of arts—architecture, sculpture, painting etc.—progressed well. Vihars were built all over the country for giving permanent abodes to the Buddhist monks. The *Stambhas* or pillars bearing religious emblems were raised by the pious followers of Buddhism in honour of their teacher and other holy men. Similarly, big *stupas* of stone were raised

over the relics of the Buddha and the Bodhisatvas. The whole life-story of Lord Buddha was expressed in stone. The Buddhists were the first to dedicate cave temples. These new buildings of Vihars, temples and monuments were richly carved and ornamented and thus in course of time a new style of architecture and sculpture came into existence. Some pieces of Buddhist sculpture are considered to be as the finest specimens of art in the world. The stupas at Sanchi, Bharhut and Amravati, the stone pillars of Asoka and the cave temples of Kanheri (Bombay), Karle (Poona) and Nasik are considered the best specimens of the Buddhist art. The Stupa at Sanchi is world-renowned for its gateways and railings which are profusely covered with sculpture, depicting either scenes from the Buddha's life or incidents from his legendary past lives. Then, the Gandhar art is the outcome of Buddhist patronage. It tried to interpret Indian subjects and religious conceptions through the Greeco-Roman technique. It had plenty of charm. Again, the Buddhists set the example of constructing and dedicating cave temples, and the Hindus and Jains followed it. If the chisel was busy in expressing the Buddhist ideals of life in stone, the brush did not lag behind. The walls of the caves and the temples were richly decked with beautiful frescoes which perhaps formed the life-work of many of the artists. The remnants cf this art at Ajanta, Bagh and Sigiriya (Ceylon) would suffice to inspire a person even to-day. The Buddhist art was essentially an art with an intense feeling for nature and a vivid comprehension of the unity of all life, human, animal and vegetable. It had spirituality which is more intended than made manifest. It displayed an evident delight in life felt by the people. Life in it had the continuity of a stream and space was reduced to a convention. Kings, princes, courtiers, merchants, hunters, gods, goddesses, men, women, angels, fairies, animals, trees, creepers, flowers all were spread across the surface of the stone and fused into a dignified cavalcade of life. The method of the Buddhist art was that of continuous narration and the technique used was one of the memory-picture.[1]

Ancient India by Dr. B. C. Gokhale, p. 212-214. For details about the Buddhist art see *Indian Architecture* (*Buddhist and Hindu*) by Percy Brown, Chapters V to VIII.

8. *Equality and Toleration.* Buddhism denounced the caste-system with all its distinctions and advocated equality in society. All could embrace Buddhism and partake the Buddha's message, irrespective of sex, age or position in society. This shattered the conception of caste distinctions and divisions and made people tolerant of each other. Buddhism also preached to the princes principles of peace, forbearance, love, affection and tolerance. Consequently the outlook and policy of the princes underwent a considerable change.

9. *Intellectual Freedom.* The authority of the Vedas, the supremacy of the priestly class and the complicated elaboration of the rites undermined the intellectual freedom. The Buddha raised his voice against it. He encouraged independent thinking and advocated free scope for individuality in religion. He asked his disciples to be rational in outlook. Instead of following doctrines or dogmas blindly, they should first get themselves convinced of their truth. Consequently the thinkers of the later ages pondered independently over the problems of philosophy and offered their original contributions in the realm of philosophy. All this produced the world-renowned Buddhist philosophers like Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dharmkirti, etc.

10. *The Buddhist Influence on Indian History.* The course of political history of India also reveals sure signs of Buddhist influence. Buddhism changed the whole history of India by striking in the hearts of kings and princes a sense of horror of blood-shed and war. It was the Buddhist law that forced Asoka to give up war and make his policy pacific. The adoption of the Buddhist pacific creed by Asoka proved a serious set-back to the imperial policy of the monarchs of Magadha. It not only gravely hindered the territorial extension of Magadha, but the extraordinary humane policy of Emperor Asoka jeopardised the very existence of the Maurya Empire. In absence of proper occupation for a continuous period of thirty years the Asokan army lost its morale and therefore, later on, failed to resist the Bactrian Greeks when they invaded India. The policy of the Mauryan state under Emperor Asoka became more humane and philanthropic and the code of punishment, too, was revised and made more benevolent and sympathetic for the people. The

Asokan government widely extended also its sphere of philanthropic activities and provided free hospitals for men and animals alike. It seems that the instruction of *Pinjrapoles* and the *Go-shalas* which is a prominent feature of the modern Hindu charitable institutions had their origin in the Asokan free hospitals for animals.

Again, Buddhism, unlike some other religions, never resorted to the sword and acts of vandalism to gain its adherents. This made the Indian nation shrink from shedding blood and adopt pacific temperament. The vivid descriptions of the horrors of war terrified the Indians out of the political life and the life of war. Buddhism thus toned down the martial spirit in the country. Consequently, Indians discarded martial games and exercises and in due course fell an easy prey to the sturdy invaders from the North.

11. *Political Unity and Nationalism.* As stated above, Buddhism popularized the Indian vernaculars. It made a direct appeal to the primary emotions of its audience. Its simplicity endeared it to the common folk who came to look upon it as the religion of the country. Buddhism, thus, helped in the evolution of the Indian nation and paved the way for a political union of Indian.

12. *Diffusion of Indian Culture abroad.* But the most important fact is that Buddhism proved to be one of the greatest civilizing forces which India gave to the neighbouring countries. Buddhism broke the isolation of India and established an intimate contact between India and the foreign countries. It was India's greatest gift to the outer world. Indian monks and scholars carried Buddhism and indirectly Indian culture to foreign countries from the third century B.C. onwards. Indian culture and civilisation had been carried by the Buddhist Missionaries into China, Mangolia, Manchuria, Korea, Japan, Burma, Java, Sumatra, Indo-China and other countries since the days of Asoka. Thereafter the foreign converts to Buddhism looked up to India as the Holy-land—the cradle of their faith and pilgrimage to this country became the highest ambition of their life. This tie of religion came to bind many foreigners with our country and paved the path for carrying the Indian culture abroad.

Other Sects

Buddhist and Jain literatures speak of numerous other sects teaching variations of doctrines and practices during this period. The following were some of the important sects among them.

First comes the *Ajivikas* who were said to be Sudra Sanyasis whose leader was Makkhali Gosala. Born a slave himself Makkhali was a radical teacher who denied even the basic doctrine of all Hindu thought—theory of Karma. He argued that 'man is subject to the laws of nature. Action, therefore, cannot lead a man out of the inevitable and so a quietist view of life is desirable.' Gosala's followers centred round Sravasti, the capital of Kosala where Gosala preached and died sixteen years before Vardhman Mahavir. Ajivikism altogether disappeared from India in the fourteenth century A. D. after being shifted from province to province.

Another radical sect was that of Ajita Kesakambaten who taught that everything ended with death, a precursor of the Sunyavadins. Another sect was that of Purana Kassapo, a Brahman teacher, whose main doctrine was that action was neither of merit nor of demerit. He was a very popular teacher.

Besides the protestant sects described above, there were developing even within the fold of the orthodox Hinduism some other sects which did not distinctly repudiate the Vedas. They became very prominent in the later history of Hinduism and acquired considerable power and popularity. 'The feature of these sects was the worship of one particular god as the supreme deity.' He was conceived as Vishnu, Siva, Sakti or some other form. Salvation could be achieved through His grace and one has to follow the path of *Bhakti* for this. It was during that age that the Vedic gods were being reshuffled, some receding into the background and others coming to the forefront. To the latter class belong Vishnu and Rudra (Siva) both different in character from Vedic gods of those names. The devotees of Vishnu called Vaishnavas or Bhagavatas developed a sect called the *Bhagavatism*, while those of Rudra developed a sect called *Saivism*. The Vaishnavas inculcated intense love and devotion to Vasudeva-Krishna, the hero of the Mahabharat, who was identified with Vishnu, the Supreme God. When the theory of

dashavatar (ten incarnations) was evolving, it came to be believed that Vishnu had undergone many incarnations to save the world from some impending catastrophe. Rama, the hero of Ramayan, later on came to be respected as one of such incarnations. The personal love and deep devotion (*Bhakti*) of the worshipper to his god, who was given a human touch, and the emphasis on the supreme importance of doing one's worldly duties according to one's status in society made Bhagavatism very attractive to the people. At first it was confined to the Mathura District. Later on, it spread all over India and became very popular due to the human elements contained in it. *Saivism* had its origin deeply rooted in the worship of a prototype of Shiva at Mohenjodaro in the pre-Aryan age. With the lapse of time this god of the pre-Aryans became identified with god Rudra of the Vedic Age. In the Vedic age Rudra represented the destructive agency or the baleful side of a storm. He was supposed to possess benevolent characteristics as well as malevolent ones. In the age of the Upanishads he was looked upon as a Supreme God, the creator and destroyer. Later on Rudra came to occupy the front rank among Hindu gods and is known as Siva, Sambhu and Sankara. He is considered as benign and terrible, a *mahayogin*, roaming about lonely in cremation grounds, draped in hide and surrounded by wild beasts and ghosts, dwelling at his residence in the Kailasa mountain in the Himalayas, fondly attached to his family and frequently revelling in dance and music. From the very early times Siva has been worshipped as the phallus (*Linga*) which is even now very common in our country. Thus the existence of Saivism may be traced as early as the Second Century B.C.[1] Probably a definite Saiva system was set up by a person called Lakulin or Lakulisa. In the beginning Saiva sects were known as Lakula, Pasupata or Mahesvara after the name of their God or historical founder. Later on four important schools of Saivism arose—namely Pasupata, Saiva, Kapalika and Kalamukha. But the extreme

Ancient India by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, p. 185. For advanced study of these sects refer to *Vaishnavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems* by R. G. Bhandarkar.

sect of Saivism was that of the Kapalikas who followed some uncanny practices.

Conclusion. By the close of the 7th century B. C. the Hindu society was firmly established. It was the outcome of the diffusion of the Pre-Aryan and Aryan social elements. A new culture which later on came to be known as the Hindu culture was being evolved in the society. The striking feature of this culture was the dominance of religion and supremacy of the priestly class. But this religion, which was gradually evolved out of the Vedic religion, had degenerated in cumbrous, meaningless ritual. It had become cold and formal and had lost touch with the masses. This created spiritual and moral unrest in the society. Consequently, new leaders of thought and religion arose and started a number of protestant movements to purge Hinduism of its corrupt practices. The 6th century B.C. witnessed the birth of such movements in India. But only two such movements—Jainism and Buddhism—stood the test of time and survived. They carried the spiritual truths and the message of love to the very cottage of the poor and the courts of the princes and deeply influenced the course of Indian history. They had enriched the Indian culture by using art to express religion. As a result of this, a new style of architecture, sculpture and painting came into being producing the finest specimens of art in the world. But more than this, Buddhism successfully carried the torch of Indian religion and culture beyond the confines of India.

Chapter 6

The Pre-Mauryan Age 650-321 B.C.

WITH the advent of the seventh century B. C. Indian history becomes precise and clear. Before this century everything is obscure and chronology is indefinite. The Buddhist and Jain sacred books provide us enough material to construct the political history of India. These books reveal that the whole of the northern India, at this time, was divided into sixteen small and big monarchies and a number of small tribal republics. The most important among these were the kingdom of Kosal with Sravasti as its capital, Kasi with Banaras as its capital, Avanti with Ujjain as its capital, Vatsa with Kausambi as its capital and Magadha, the capital of which was Rajgriha. Out of the republics Vijji with Vaisali as capital was the most important one. It was a powerful confederation of eight tribes of which the Lichchhavis played a very prominent part. The main political interest in this period lies in the gradual rise of Magadha to power. During the course of the following two centuries all the above-mentioned kingdoms were gradually absorbed into one imperial power set up in Magadha, first by the Saisunaga Dynasty (642 to 413 B. C.) and then by the Nanda Dynasty (413 to 322 B.C.). Bimbisara of Saisunaga Dynasty (582 to 554 B.C.) was the real founder of the greatness of Magadha. He was related to the kings of Kosala and Vaisali. He conquered the neighbouring kingdom of Anga and gained thereby the control of the lower course of the river Ganges. He built the new Rajgriha. He was a vigorous ruler and his administration was efficient. He retired in favour of his son Ajatasatru (491-

459 B.C.) who later on built the fortress of Patali which came to be known as Patliputra. The Buddha and Mahavir both preached in his reign. He was the most important ruler of the dynasty. He extended considerably the boundaries of his kingdom and laid the foundations of its future greatness. Magadha under him became a dominant power in eastern India and its rulers claimed undisputed sway over the whole region between the Ganges and the Himalayas. He was succeeded by his son Darsaka in whose reign Skylax, the Persian General, surveyed the Indus Valley. Udaya was the next sovereign and he was succeeded by Nandi Vardhana and Mahanandin. The illegitimate son of Mahanandin, Mahapadmananda, found the Nanda Dynasty. There are conflicting accounts of the Nanda Dynasty which ruled for 91 years, but according to Jain traditions it lasted for about 155 years. Mahapadmananda was endowed with a remarkable military genius. He is said to have destroyed all the Kshatriyas and small kingdoms like the Kasis, the Panchalas, the Kurus, the Saursenas and others were absorbed in the expanding empire of Magadha. Mahapadmananda proved to be a great conqueror and vigorous ruler and the empire of Magadha under him and his successor became a mighty empire, extending from the Bay of Bengal in the east to the Sutlej in the west. According to Indian as well as Greek accounts, the Nandas possessed immense wealth and vast military resources. The last ruler of the Nanda Dynasty, Dhanananda, was dethroned by Chandragupta Maurya.

The Persian occupation of India. When the rulers of Magadha were extending their dominions in India, the kings of Persia were also building up their power. Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire, had extended his conquest right up to the Hindukush and Gandhara formed a part of his empire. Darius I, another ruler of Persian Empire, sent his admiral Skylax to explore the mouths of the Indus river. This was followed by an expedition to India in 517-16 B.C. resulting in the annexation of a portion of the Punjab. This formed the twentieth province of the Persian Empire comprising the whole of the Indus Valley and probably stretching as far as the Salt

Range in the Jhelum District. The Punjab dominions of Darius formed the richest and most populous of the province of the Empire of Persia yielding a revenue of Rupees one crore and fifty lakhs per annum. The Persian governors and district officers were stationed in the Punjab and the Punjabis were also recruited in the Persian army and they fought under the banner of Persia in Greece.

Result of the Persian connection with India. The Persian conquest had unveiled India probably for the first time to the western world and established contact between this country and the people of Persia. This proved beneficial to both the countries and commercial and cultural exchange between the two received a fresh stimulus from the fact that the great Asiatic land-routes, which terminated on the Mediterranean on one side and on the Indus on the other, were all controlled by the Persian Emperor. The commercial intercourse paved the path for an interchange of social and political ideas between the two countries and probably the growth of an empire in Persia gave birth to the conception of unification of Northern India under the Saisunagas and the Mauryas. Persian scribes introduced into India the Armaic form of writing which later developed into the well-known Kharoshthi script, written from right to left. It is found mostly in the tablets in the western parts of India and continued down to the third century A.D. Some scholars hold the opinion that the pillared hall of Asoka at Patliputra, his edicts on pillars and rocks, his pillars with round bell-shaped *abaci* and bull or lion capitals owe their origin to the Persian influence. According to V.A. Smith the Mauryan art which reached its apex in the reign of Asoka, bears an undeniable stamp of the Persian art which in its turn, was to some extent, influenced by close contact with the people of Greece in the fourth and the third centuries B.C. Marked Persian influence has been also traced even in some of the social customs prevailing at Taxila. The use of the Persian word 'Satrap' in India, the Mauryan practice of the hair-washing ceremony observed by Chandragupta Maurya, and the practice of lighting eternal sacred fire, followed by Kanishka, are traced to Persian influence. It has been suggested that the

Mauryan Emperor Chandragupta introduced some of the court ceremonials of the Persian Emperors, and employed in the Mauryan Imperial Service Persian nobles of ability and administrative experience. Tushaspha, for example, was one of those whose name and designation as Governor of Kathiawar is preserved in the Junagadh (Girnar) rock inscription.[1] However, the sphere of the Persian influence can hardly have reached beyond the realm of the Indus and its tributaries. (*Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, p. 341.)

Alexander's invasion. It has been said that the Greek culture influenced the course of Indian culture. Alexander's invasion provided an opportunity for the Greeks to visit India. Some of them settled down here. Therefore, I describe below the effect of Alexander's invasion. At the death of his father, Philip, Alexander became the king of Macedone in 336 B. C. After conquering the whole of Greece, he subjugated Persia, Asia Minor, Egypt, etc., and then turned towards India in 326 B. C. It should be emphasised here that it is not India that Alexander invaded but the province of the Punjab that was included in the Persian Empire. Alexander's so-called wars on Indian soil were not against any organised state but against local chiefs who had acknowledged the sovereignty of the Persian Emperor. With ease he conquered these petty principalities and marched up to the Bias where the Persian territory ended. During his march towards India, the ruler of Taxila, the gatekeeper of India, readily yielded and became an ally of Alexander. But the ruler of the adjoining kingdom, Porus, was determined to resist the advance of the Macedonian invader. So a fierce fight took place on the Karri plain where Porus was defeated, but Alexander by his generosity conciliated his noble foe by restoring him his kingdom. Alexander, then, advanced eastwards with the intention of attacking Magadha, but the war-worn Macedonian army refused to go farther than

1 Refer to the articles by Dr. D. B. Spooner in the *Journal of Royal Asiatic Society* (1915) (pp. 63-89, 405-455) under the caption "*The Zoroastrian Period of Indian History*". These articles point out wider influence of Persia upon India. But his arguments are far-fetched.

river Bias. Alexander, therefore, left India without achieving much. During his return march he met with strong opposition from the democratic tribes of Siboi, Agalassoi, Kshudrakas, Mallas, etc., but he overcame all of them, though he narrowly escaped in the battle with the Mallas. When he reached Babylon in 323 B. C. he died of fever there.

Effects of Alexander's invasion.[1] Alexander's invasion did not create any impression on the minds of the Indians as it was confined to the western part of India. His expedition at best remained a mere raid on frontier provinces. Though he annexed Gandhara and the Indus Valley to the Macedonian Empire, but they soon became independent and all traces of the short-lived Greek rule disappeared from India within two years of Alexander's death. There is, therefore, little wonder if Indians ignored Alexander's expedition. He came like a hurricane, stayed in India for nineteen months and departed from India leaving the heart of the country untouched. For Indians he was a mere invader who disturbed the peace of a part of the country for some time and went away, eclipsing Chengiz Khan and Timur in committing atrocities and shedding considerable blood. Viewed from the border stand-point, Alexander's invasion, therefore, could have no importance. It was a mere raid that did not attract even the attention of the Indian writers.

Then, judging his generalship from the events in India, Alexander does not appear to be an outstanding figure and distinguished military genius. All that he achieved in India was a hard fought victory over Porus—a king of a petty state in the Punjab and that, too, with the help of an Indian king, Ambhi, a bitter enemy of Porus and one who had betrayed the nation by unhinging the doors of India to a foreigner. In fact, it was a victory of a great general over a petty chief in a distant corner of India. His defeat did not affect the rest of India, much less was it a triumph of the West over the East. The following quatrain, therefore, may be aptly cited to express this view—

"The East bowed before the blast,
In patient deep disdain ;

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[1] See also *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, pp. 383-390.

She let the legions thunder past,
And plunged in thought again."

But it seems that if the Indians have underestimated the importance of Alexander's expedition, the Greeks have equally exaggerated it. The Greek writers like Arrian, Curtius, etc., have exaggerated the significance of the event by devoting page after page to its description. They have taken pains to describe his campaign and conquests in minutest details. To them Alexander was one of the greatest conquerors of the world.

However, it is wrong for the Indians to ignore Alexander's invasion completely. It had direct and immediate result on the course of Indian history. By seriously crippling the number of small warring kingdoms and tribes that abounded in the Punjab and Sind, Alexander paved the way for Chandragupta to give to the north-west India a political unity and make it a strong integral portion of the empire of Magadha. Thus if Mahapadmananda was the predecessor of Chandragupta Maurya in the east, Alexander was the fore-runner of that empire in the north-west.

Though the Punjab and Sind began to enjoy the blessings of a unified rule as the direct and immediate result of Alexander's invasion, the Indians ignored the superiority of the Greek art of warfare. The Indian rulers and their military captains seem to have paid no heed to the Greek mode of warfare. They stuck to their traditional methods of fighting and continued for centuries to place their chief reliance on their elephant brigades.

But there is one historical gain in the date of Alexander's invasion, *i.e.*, 326 B.C. The clearly dated records of Alexander's Indian campaign left by his companions helped to build Indian chronology for subsequent political events on a definite basis. The date of Alexander's invasion, in fact, forms the sheet anchor of Indian chronology. In addition to this, the invasion brought in India a number of Greeks of eminence, who wrote the accounts of that time, and they have become important source of early Indian history. The original works of these Greek writers are lost, but quotations taken from them by latter writers are available to-day and it is from these fragments that we get

a detailed picture of the political, social and religious conditions of India at this time.

Some historians think that Alexander's campaign resulted in the opening up of new lines of communication and new routes for trade and maritime enterprise, which brought India and the West into closer contact with each other, facilitating cultural exchange between them. Strabo points out that the Oxus (Amu Daria) joined a link in an important chain along which the Indian goods were carried to the European countries by way of the Caspian and the Black Sea. Patrocles, an Admiral in the service of Antiochus I, the successor of Seleucus Nikator, also remarked that the route was a popular one in the third century B.C. Evidence of a brisk trade with India is also furnished by the coins of Greek models minted in Babylon and found in large numbers in the frontier province of India.

In addition to the above effects, the following distinct cultural effects of Alexander's campaign must also be noted. The Greek kingdoms in Syria, Bactria and other parts of Asia which had been established on the disruption of Alexander's empire, produced, in course of time, close cultural contact between India and Europe. It was this contact with these Indo-Greek or Indo-Bactrian kings that was responsible for the improvement of the Indian coinage. The coins of the Indo-Greek rulers which were discovered in Taxila replaced the older Indian punch-marked and ill-shaped ones and the subsequent coins of India were cast on well-shaped Greek models. Another result of the contact, it is said, is that the system of Indian astronomy is largely influenced by the Hellenic system. Again, during the reign of the great emperor Kanishka, Bactria formed a part of his empire. He invited, it is said, many Greeco-Bactrian sculptors to Gandhara for making images of the Buddha and Boddhisattvas. They blended the Greek and the Indian art in image-making. This led to the growth of a new type of sculpture, known as the Gandhara School of Art. It is another distant and distinct effect of Alexander's campaign.

As regards the Greeks, they learned a good deal of the sciences, arts, philosophy, mathematics and medicine from India during the period of this contact. Indian philosophy greatly

influenced Greek thought and culture. A host of Indians went to Greece and Asia Minor and there the ideas of the East might have percolated. It has been also suggested that after the formation of the Greek kingdom in the north-west of India, Indian philosophy affected even Christianity.

Life and Culture in the Pre-Mauryan Age or The Early Magadhan Epoch or the Buddhist India (650 to 325 B.C.).[1] The Jain and the Buddhist literature, particularly the Tripitakas and the Jatakas, throw a flood of light on the social, political, economic and religious life of Northern India during the period of three hundred years which preceded the Mauryan Empire.

Polity. Politically India was split up into petty states, some of which were powerful monarchies fighting to build up imperial states while others were republics prevailing in tribal territories. There were political rivalry and wars which often ended in matrimonial alliances. Though the kshatriyas were the ruling class standing above all, non-kshatriya kingship was not unknown. In Jataka II, 326, we find that a tyrannical king was replaced by a Brahman king. In the states governed by kings, the ruler enjoyed special prerogatives and privileges. The king had the right to land revenue and other taxes. Among other royal dues, mention may be made of "milk-money" paid by the people when an heir was born to the king, and taxes and octroi duties paid by merchants. At times the king also imposed forced labour and claimed the right to dispose of forest land and unowned property. The sovereign had the right to forest lands. Monarchies were often hereditary and the reigning prince frequently nominated his successor. But cases of election are referred to by all authorities. Choice was sometimes confined to members of the royal family but sometimes selections were made from outside.

An Advanced History of India by Majumdar, Ray-Chaudhari, and Dutta, pp. 71-84 ; *Early History of India* by N.N. Ghosh, pp. 85-94 ; *Hindu Civilization* by R.K. Mookarji, Chapter VII, pp. 296-310 ; *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, Chapter VIII ; *Buddhist India* by Rhys Davids, Chapter VI ; *The Early History of India* by V.A. Smith ; *Hindu Polity* by Jayaswal ; *The Age of the Imperial Unity*, Chapters XXI, XXIII, pp. 542-579 and 595-608.

With the growth of kingdoms and their territorial expansion the office of the Viceroy and provincial Governor became more and more significant, and it was often held by a prince of the royal blood and sometimes choice fell on military chiefs of the imperial court. Among state officials, the *Purohita* was of special importance and sometimes a single person was at one time the *Purohita* of the three kingdoms as in the case of Kasi, Kosala and Videha. In some kingdoms the *Purohita* was over-shadowed by the *Senapati* who was often a prince of the royal blood or a person of royal rank. In addition to his military duties he had to do judicial work in certain parts of the country. The *Purohita* and *Senapati* with other ministers formed the chief executive of the king in the monarchical state. In the Republican states the members of the executive probably were required to consult the Assembly more frequently.

The most important aspect of the administrative development of his period was the rise of a class of high officials called *Mahamatras*. They are unknown to the Vedic Age and disappear after the Maurya and Satavahana period. Their duties were of varied character. Some looked after general affairs, others administered justice, a few had the charge of the army and others were entrusted with the work of measurement of the king's share of the produce.

In the administration of justice, though the king continued to play an important part by giving decisions, much of the judicial work was now entrusted to the *Vyavaharikas* or judges. There were various graded tribunals, set one above the other, from the court of the *Vinischaya* Mahamatra to that of the *rajan*. Judgments were pronounced according to the Book of Customs and in criminal law the use of ordeals was recognised.

As regards army, important changes were affected in military organisation by the introduction of war elephants as a regular feature of the fighting forces. Armies of this age usually consisted of four elements ; infantry, cavalry, chariots and elephants. There was also a department for navy. To these were added labourers, spies and local guides. The accounts of the Greek writers show us that the rulers of the deltaic regions maintained small fleets. The infantry, clad in cotton garments,

generally carried long bows and iron-tipped arrows made of cane. Some soldiers were armed with spears and carried a two-handed sword and a buckler of undressed ox-hide. The cavalry had generally the same equipment as the infantry. The chariots were drawn by the horses or wild asses. Each chariot carried six men, of whom two were bow-men, two were shield-bearers and two were charioteers. Greek writers point out that in the art of warfare Indians were far superior to other peoples of Asia and the Indian commanders pinned their faith more upon elephants than upon horses.

The kingless states or republics were known as *ganas* or *sangha*. Like monarchies they, too, were not all of the same type. They differed in their constitutions and governments. Some were tribal oligarchies, others had a democratic constitution ; some included several clans, others were limited to single *kulas* or even cities. Some were sovereign states, while others tendered homage to some neighbouring potentate, enjoying a considerable degree of local autonomy. However, there were certain common features to monarchies as well as republic. Each had its *parishad* or assembly or parliament which held its meetings in an open hall called the *Santhagara*. The *parishad* met frequently and the laws were made by it. The method of procedure usually adopted in the tribal meeting was not by voting on a motion. But the point at issue in the meeting was either carried unanimously or referred for arbitration to a committee of referees. In addition to the general assembly at the capital, there were local *parishads* in all important places in the state. Executive government in the republics was in the hands of a single chief or many chiefs styled *Rajan*, *Gana-rajan* or *Samghamukhya*. The title *rajan* was loosely applied to all the distinguished chief men of the state. In addition to the *Rajan* there were other officials designated *Uparajan* (Vice-Consul), *Senapati* (General), *Bhandagarika* (treasurer), etc. Some of the republican governments are mentioned to have had regular police officers, who were distinguished by a special headgear, and were notorious for extortion and violence.

Social Life

The glimpses of life in towns and cities, as given in Jataka

stories, indicate that the people lived as comfortably in those early times as they do now, if some of the more modern amenities of life which are introduced as the result of scientific inventions are eliminated. Though the common people mostly lived in villages in humble dwellings made of thatch, there were big fortified towns and cities. The towns, though few in number, contained important buildings, like assembly halls, courts of justice, royal-palaces, watch-towers and gates in lofty-walls, and had all the amenities of life such as pleasure parks, streets watered and lighted with torches, houses, dancing halls, places of amusements, booths for traders and work-places for artisans. Royal palaces were built of wood and stone and buildings of seven storeys in height are referred to in the Buddhist texts. People were fond of singing and dancing and took interest in such amusements as acrobatic feats, combats of animals and a kind of primitive chess play. But the chief amusements of knights were gambling, hunting, listening to stories of war and tournaments in amphitheatres. The dress consisted of a cotton tunic and two other pieces of stuff. One of them was thrown about the shoulders and the other twisted round head. Both men and women were fond of ornaments. Men wore ear-rings, dyed their beards and used umbrellas and shoes. Women of the aristocratic class were decked with golden stars about their heads and a multitude of necklets and bangles studded with valuable gems. Girls of the aristocratic class in the Gangetic region wore necklaces, waist-bands and anklets adorned with small bells. They were gaudily dressed in linen or yellow or red silken clothes. Women did not wear a veil. Stitched clothes were coming into fashion. References to the variety of shoes in the Vinaya texts reveal the use of shoes by people.

The slaughter of animals was regarded as cruel and ghoulish. The practice of substituting images of animals made out of meal for living creatures and the conception "don't kill the guiltless cow" reflect the growing feeling of pity for animate beings, and so the use of meat was gradually being disfavoured. However, according to Greek observers, the meals of the Indians of the north-west border consisted of pulpy rice and seasoned meat,

served upon a gold dish placed on a table. There was a custom of a common meal where people ate in public. Wine drinking was not widely prevalent except on the occasions of religious festivals. Joint-family system characterised the society. The eldest male member in the family was the head. He used to look after the family and guide its interests. Birth of a child was celebrated splendidly, especially the birth of a son.

Position of women in the period under review seems to have deteriorated from that in the Vedic times. So subordinate was their position in society that the Buddha was very reluctant in admitting them into his Sangha. Though the burning of widows was not sanctioned by the orthodox law-givers, the practice of *sati* was known in the north-west. Because the Greek writers refer to the widow of an Indian commander who burned herself on the pyre of her husband after decking splendidly as for a wedding. Alexander's contemporaries observe that the women took up the arms of their fallen relatives and fought side by side with the men against the enemy of their country. Education was not denied to women, some of whom are referred to as being well reputed for their deep knowledge, learning and dialectic skill. They held honourable position in society and household. Buddhist texts mention some verses composed by princesses and nuns and they are preserved in the *Theri-gatha*. Women were well-versed in the art of music and dancing. Child-marriage was gradually coming into vogue, but marriage at a mature age was also not uncommon. Great emphasis was laid on the physical chastity of woman and her unquestioned obedience to her husband. References to *swayambars* of some girls indicate that the *swayambar* system was in vogue. Polygamy was gradually growing. Pardah system was not followed by women. On the whole women enjoyed considerable freedom. They participated in ceremonies, fairs etc. There are references to women who renounced world for the sake of spiritual salvation. They were learned. There were women students designated *Brahma-vadini* or life-long students of the sacred texts. There were other types of women called *Sadyodvaha*. They prosecuted their studies till their marriage. Most of the Buddhist nuns were maidens

who devoted themselves to religion and philosophy and carried on discussion on abstruse questions of philosophy.

Society as a whole continued to be organised on the basis of caste system. It became something like a federation of castes and sub-castes whose members retained their identity in some or other form. Caste was not altogether static, because new sub-castes frequently arose from migration, fusion or sub-division. Although the Buddhist and Jain texts admit the general frame-work of the caste-system, they challenge the supremacy of the Brahmans and declared the Kshatriyas superior to the Brahmans. The preachings of the Buddha and Mahavir that one's caste must not be determined on the mere accident of his birth, had not met with popular acceptance. Social distinctions were becoming rigid and the Greek writers at the close of this period observe that inter-marriage between castes was prohibited, and change of occupation and caste was forbidden by social customs. But inter-caste marriage was sometimes practised by royal families and persons of high rank. Buddhist writers acknowledge the existence of the four *varnas* and many degraded tribes and low trades (*hina jati* and *hina silpa*), besides aboriginal peoples, outcastes and slaves. The untouchables or the outcastes known as the Chandalas were despised in the society. They were doomed to miserable plight and lived outside the city or village. Though the Buddhist texts reveal the fact that caste with its appendage of *hina jati* or untouchables took deep root in society they also refer to a certian elasticity of caste rules in the matter of *connubium*, commensality and change of calling. Brahmans married ladies from royal families; princes, priests and pedlars ate together and inter-married; Brahmans and Kshatriyas tilted the soil and took to trade and menial work without losing their caste or social position. The Buddhist texts tell us that Kshatriyas worked as potters, basket-makers, garland-makers, reed-workers, cooks and cultivators ; Vaishyas worked as tailors, potters; Brahmans worked as physicians, servants, tax-collectors, traders, farmers, priests, police-men and diggert of the soil without loss of prestige. It is, therefore, clear that social divisions and economic professions did not exactly coincide, though the texts testisfy to a natural predilection of artisans and traders for the ancestral occupations.

Economic Condition

Most of the people lived in closely clustered villages and followed the peaceful pursuit of agriculture. Houses were clustered together to ensure safety. Each family had its own fields cultivated by the owner and his sons, who at times employed hired labour. The holdings were generally small, but large ones were also not uncommon. There is no reference about landlords owning large estates, nor beggars and very poor men in villages. There was the 'peasant proprietorship'. Each village was a self-sufficient unit. Rice, barley and sugarcane formed the principal crops. The Buddhist and Jain texts mention a few cities. They were generally fortified. Usually the houses were made of wood and brick. The rich lived in magnificent structures, whereas the poor in meagre dwellings. The administrative affairs of the village were managed by the village council under a head-man who was selected by the council and not by the king of the country. It was the head-man, an important person in the village, who was held responsible for the collection of state revenues which ranged from a twelfth to a sixth of the gross produce of the land. The share of the state was collected in grain and stored in government granaries in various parts of the country as a protection against famine or drought. The village peasants were generally a contented lot and developed a sturdy civil spirit and the method of co-operative life for the common good. The Buddhist texts mention that all able-bodied villagers co-operated together to construct reservoirs, irrigation canals, roads, and fencing for the common benefit of the village. The women of the village fully co-operated in these works of public utility. The rural population included, besides the village agriculturists, a considerable body of ranchman who tended cattle. They were employed to guard the royal cattle and take the flocks of the cattle of the village-folk to the common grazing ground of the village, beyond the cultivated lands. On the whole, villagers were happy and contented. Crimes were very rare. Life in the village was simple, self-sufficient and unsophisticated. But people sometimes suffered from famines caused by droughts and floods.

Handicraftsmen constituted a large part of the population both in rural and urban areas. Though young-men followed

their father's professions generally, but castes did not determine crafts. Persons changed their professions to suit their needs. There are references to a weaver becoming an archer, Brahmans working as traders, carpenters and Kshatriyas as farmers. The number of professions was large and included workers in stone and ivory and painters of frescoes. Some crafts and callings were considered lower and higher according to the nature of the work; for example, hunters, trappers, fishermen, butchers, tanners, snake-charmers, actors, dancers, musicians, rushweavers, etc. were considered lower than ivory-workers, confectioners, jewellers, workers in metals, bow and arrow makers, potters, garland-makers, hair-dressers, etc. On the whole arts and crafts attained to a considerable measure of proficiency. In some of the industries a considerable degree of specialisation was reached. They were also, to a large extent, localised and limited to particular families. Eighteen of the more important crafts[1] were organised into guilds (*Shreni*, *Puga*). Each of these was presided over by a *Pramukha* (foreman), *Jyeshthaka* (elder) or *Shreshthin* (chief). His position was one of great responsibility and honour. There were also *Maha-sreshthin* or supreme chief and *Anusreshthin* or deputy chief and the *Bhandagarika* who combined the post of state treasurer with supreme headship over all the Shrenis. The crafts and traders' guilds admitted apprentices called *antevasikas*. There are references in *Jatakas* about extensive partnership in trade and industry among groups of merchants. Trade, both inland and external, was in a fairly brisk condition. For purposes of trade and commerce there existed trade routes which linked up the principal centres of trade in various parts of India. One great highway connected the chief industrial and commercial centres like Sravasti, Nalanda, Rajgriha with Central and Western Asia by way of the prosperous city of Taxila. Another stretched from Rajgriha by way of Sravasti in Oudh to the banks of the Godavari. Still another, and a far more difficult route lay across the desert of Rajasthan to the ports of Sauvira in the lower Indus Valley and of the Upper Deccan near the mouth of the Narbada. Branch routes also connected Sravasti, Ujjain,

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[1] The Jatakas often give a list of eighteen principal crafts.

Kausambi and Banaras which were flourishing trade centres. In the Vinaya texts there is a mention of the main river route from east to west along the Ganges at *Shahjati* whence up the Jamuna the route reached Kausambi. Goods were carried both on pack animals and bullock carts. Long strings of these moved together under the protection of hired escorts. Brigands infested trade-routes especially the less frequented ones. They looted the goods of the merchants whenever they could do so.

Trade with countries outside India was kept up by the land and sea-routes. India pushed up her external trade along the great Asiatic land-route that passed through Taxila in Gandhara country and Central Asia and terminated on the coast of the Mediterranean, whereas her trade with Arabia and the western countries was carried on by the sea-routes of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. The Buddhist texts have evidences to show us that sea-borne trade was maintained with Ceylon, Burma, Sumatra and Malaya Peninsula through the Bay of Bengal. Sea-voyages and trading journeys were made by the Indians to these countries. The main sea-ports were *Bhrigukachcha* (Broach), *Surparaka* (Sopara, north of Bombay) and perhaps *Tamralipti* (Tamluk in West Bengal). Of the river ports Kausambi on the Jamuna, Ajodhya on the Sarayu, Sravasti on the Rapti, Potana on the Godavari ; Kashi, Champa and later on Patliputra on the Ganges and Pattala on the Indus deserve special mention.

Principal items of export were silk, muslin, finer sorts of cloth, cutlery, armour, brooches, embroideries, rugs, perfumes, drugs, ivory, ivory-works, and jewellery of gold and silver. The system of barter had not disappeared altogether, but the use of coins as the medium of exchange was becoming general. The standard unit of value for exchange was the copper coin called Karshapana. It was weighing a little more than 146 grains. Silver Karshapana was called *Purana* or *Dharana* and was a little more than 58 grains. The weight and relative value of coins probably varied in different parts. Moreover, coins were not much in use except in very big towns. Money was lent for business and interest was paid on loans.

Religion

From the religious point of view, the early days of the

Magadhan ascendancy were among the most eventful in Indian history. Great significant changes took place within the fold of Brahmanism. In addition to many sects within, new protestant movements gathered force and momentum to purge Brahmanism of its corrupt practices. An account of these has already been given in the preceding chapter.

Chapter 7

Period of Empires

The Mauryan Empire and its importance (322—184 B. C.). For a student of the political and cultural history of ancient India, the Mauryan period is of special interest and significance. The rise of the Maurya dynasty ushers in a new era in the political and cultural history of India. The advent of the Mauryas marks the passage from darkness to light for the historian. It was in this Mauryan Age that the whole of India was politically united for the first time under one head and rule. The founder of the Mauryan Empire, Chandragupta, swept away the Greek garrisons from the Punjab and Sind and established a vast empire in Northern India which he and his successors were able to maintain for more than one hundred years. The Mauryan Emperors claimed supremacy not only in India, but over lands beyond the borders of India. This political unification makes the chronology precise and henceforth the historian can present a connected account of the country and does not lose his way in the confusing account of petty kingdoms. Political unity leads to historical unity. Again, it was under the Mauryans that a uniform system of administration, which even claims admiration of modern writers for its efficiency and smooth-running, was set up throughout the extensive Mauryan Empire and uniform administration under Chandragupta and his successors had also brought in its train the cultural unity of the country.

The Mauryan rulers established political and cultural contact with other civilised monarchs like Seleucus of Syria, Ptolemy

of Egypt, Astigonos of Macedonia, Tissa of Ceylon and the ruler of Nepal. This contact with foreign kings, especially with Greek rulers of the west, helps us to fix the date of the Mauryan monarchs and assign dates to various events with reasonable accuracy and precision. Apart from this, it brought the diffusion of the Indian culture with that of the West. It was in the Mauryan Age that India became the cultural ambassador of the world, sending out missionaries to spread out India's civilisation and religion to all distant parts of the globe. It was the missionary zeal of Asoka that inspired many messengers of *Dharma* to go beyond the borders of India to fulfil their mission by carrying out actual measures of humanitarian service in the relief of sufferings of all humanity. Asoka's religious policy was broadly based on toleration and universal brotherhood which did not recognise natural frontiers or geographical boundaries. Thus India, under the Mauryans, sought to build up a new world based on pea e, brotherhood and cultural unity.

Lastly, it was in the Mauryan Age that India enjoyed blessings of continued peace and consequently trade and commerce, science, literature and art flourished well in the country.

Chandragupta Maurya (**322-298 B. C.**)

Though some writers describe him as the scion of the royal Nanda family, he was the scion of the Maurya clan of Pipphalivana.[1] His ancestry is indefinite and early life unknown. Probably he was the Commander-in-Chief of the Nanda forces and as such he formed a plot to overthrow the last Nanda ruler, but his plot failed and he fled away. Later on with the assistance of Kautilya he brought about the fall of Dhananand, the last Nanda sovereign, and established his sway over the whole of Northern India. When Seleucus, one of the successors of Alexander, invaded India in 305 B. C. Chandragupta defeated him and forced him to conclude a treaty by virtue of which he had to cede to him the whole of Afghanistan. According to Jain tradition he abdicated the throne in favour of his son and starved himself to death. He was a military genius, a born leader of men, a constructive statesman, and a beneficent ruler and ranks with the greatest monarchs of the world.

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1 *The Age of the Imperial Unity*, pp. 55-56.

Bindusara (298-273 **B. C.**)

Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Bindusara. In his reign the city of Taxila broke into revolt, but the people submitted without striking a blow. According to the Jain traditions disturbances broke out in the Deccan but they were suppressed and the Deccan was conquered. Like his father, Chandragupta, he continued friendly relations with the neighbouring Greek kings, and maintained the dignity and prestige of his government in his relations with Asiatic powers. He was a strong and wide-awake ruler and kept intact the vast empire which he inherited from his father and passed it on to his son and successor Asoka.

Asoka (273-233 **B.C.**)

Asoka is the most brilliant figure in ancient history of India and his reign marked a new epoch in political and cultural history of India. He gave a new tone to Indian life—a tone that persists still to-day. Before he ascended the throne in 273 B.C. he had received political training as Governor of Taxila and Ujjain. In 262 B.C. he waged the Kalinga war that proved the turning point of his life. The slaughter of men in the war affected him so deeply that he vowed never to wage war and made up his mind to conquer people by winning their hearts by Law of Piety. Under the influence of a Buddhist monk called Upagupta, he embraced Buddhism and became an ardent Buddhist and the greatest patron of Buddhism. He left no stone unturned to spread Buddhism and from a mere sect he turned it into a world-wide religion. His attitude towards his subjects was paternal. He was the greatest apostle of peace and morality and one of the most towering personalities in the history of the world.

Asoka's Successors. Asoka was succeeded by his two grandsons, Dasaratha and Samprati, the former ruled over the eastern part of the empire and the latter governed the western division. Both of them were mere shadows of their famous grand-father Asoka and, therefore, their reigns were brief and unimportant. But their successors were very weak and the last Mauryan ruler Brihadratha was assassinated in 184 B.C. by his Commander-in-Chief, Pushyamitra Sunga, who established a new dynasty.

On the fall of the Mauryas, India lost its political unity and

once again several petty states arose in India and Afghanistan. In India, the Mauryas were succeeded by the Sungas who in turn were succeeded by the Kanvas. Kalinga became a separate province and prospered under Kharvela of the Chet dynasty. In the south the Andhra dynasty came into power and in Afghanistan which used to be under the Mauryas several Indo-Greek kingdoms arose.

The Sunga Empire (187-75 B.C.) and its importance —Pushyamitra Sunga

Pushyamitra Sunga laid the foundation of a new dynasty in Magadha known as the Sunga Dynasty which ruled for 112 years. He was a strong and vigorous ruler and conquered the kingdom of Vidarbha. His empire extended southwards as far as Narbada. He was the master of the whole of the Madhya-Desha and, therefore, felt justified in performing *Asvamedha*, the horse-sacrifice. It was in his reign that the Greek king Menander invaded India and threatened Patliputra but was defeated and driven away. Pushyamitra was a Hindu and an ardent patron of Brahmanism and, therefore, his reign marked a powerful and militant Brahmanic reaction and the Buddhist principle of Ahimsa fell in the background.

The Successors of Pushyamitra. Pushyamitra was succeeded by his son Agnimitra who in his turn was succeeded by his son Vasumitra. There were seven successors of Vasumitra but they were all incompetent and worthless. The last king Devabhuti was assassinated in 75 B.C. by his Brahman minister Vasudeva Kanva who usurped the throne.

The Sunga Culture, Religion, Literature and Art. The Sunga rule was the result of a Brahmanic revolt against the weak and pacific Buddhist monarchy of the Mauryas. Therefore, the Sunga government restored old Brahmanic faith with its ceremonious rituals of sacrifices and the supremacy of the Brahmans and thus gave a setback to Buddhism. It was under the patronage of the Sunga kings that the Sanskrit scholar Patanjali composed his celebrated work, the Mahabhasya, and thus provided a fresh stimulus to the study of Sanskrit literature. It is probable that the Manusmriti was compiled during this period. In fact the foundations for the revival of the Brahma-

nical religion and literature which came with full force under the Gupta Emperors were laid in the time of the Sungas.

Then, the Sunga period introduced a new age in the art of building. The wooden railings of the Buddhist *stupas* of the Maurya and pre-Mauryan periods were replaced in the Sunga period by stone railings and magnificent long stone gateways ; the remains of the Bharhut *Stupa* are the examples for these changes. The sculpture reliefs on the gate-ways, pillars and cross-bars on the railings give beautiful, vivid and pictorial representations of nature and the Jataka stories. The famous Vihara at Bhaja near Poona, a group of rock-out *stupas*, and a large excavated Chaitya-hall near the old *Vihara* at Bhaja, Chaitya-halls at Nasik and Ajanta, a *stupa* at Amravati, the beautiful railing at Bodh Gaya, the beautiful Vriksha Devta at Bharhut and the Garud pillar at Besnagar, Madhya Bharat, are among the well-known examples of Sunga monuments and sculptures.

The Kanva Dynasty (75-30 B. C.)

By assassinating the last sovereign of the Sunga Dynasty, Vasudeva founded the Kanva Dynasty that was very short-lived and contained, besides him, three more sovereigns, Bhumimitra, Narayan and Susarman. Their kingdom was limited to the confines of Patliputra. The last of the dynasty was deposed by the Andhras who were then the paramount power in the Deccan. The Kanva Dynasty lasted for forty-five years and contributed little to Indian life.

The Empire of the Satvahanas or the Andhras

The Andhras were descended from the Dravidians and spoke the Telugu language. In the time of Chandragupta Maurya they ruled between the Godavari and the Krishna rivers and they were second only to the Mauryas. After the death of Asoka the Andhras became completely independent under their king Simuka. They soon extended their kingdom and became masters of the whole of the south from sea to sea. The founder of the dynasty was Simuka, but the man who raised to eminence was Satakarni I. He was a very powerful king and became paramount sovereign in the whole of Trans-Vindhyan territory. Sometime after his death, the Satvahan

power seems to have been submerged beneath a wave of Scythian invasion. We get some knowledge about it when an Andhra King slew Susarman the last Kanva ruler of Magadha in 30 B. C. But the fortunes of the dynasty were restored by Gautamiputra Satakarni who defeated Nahapana of Maharashtra and conquered large portions of Gujrat and Malwa, and thus built up an empire that extended from Malwa in the north to the Kanarese country in the south. The most important among the later Andhras was Yajnasri (166-196 A. D.) who revived the power of the Satvahans and recovered most of the territory lost by his predecessor. After him the empire of the Andhras began to fall to pieces and the dynasty ended in 225 A. D. and a number of dynasties sprang upon its ruins in the Deccan.

The Tamil Country. The far south of India beyond the Venkata Hills, known as the Tamil or Dravid county, was divided among several states. Three of these states were important. They were called Chola, Pandya and Kerala. The Chola state covered the present Tanjore and Trichinopoly districts with some adjoining areas. The Chola rulers were famous for their military activities in the second century B. C. A Chola Prince Elara conquered Ceylon. The Pandya state occupied the districts of Madura and Tinnivelly with portions of South Travancore. The Pandya rulers excelled in trade and learning. A Pandya sovereign sent an embassy to the Roman Emperor Augustus in the first century B.C. The Kerala country, embracing Malabar, Cochin and North Travancore, was to the north and west of the Pandyas.

Indo-Greek Rule (190-50 B. C.)

After the disintegration of the Mauryan Empire, India lost its political unity and for nearly two centuries North-Western India remained under the sway of the Indo-Greek rulers. Bactria became an independent kingdom in 250 B. C. and its ruler Demetrois conquered the north-western provinces of the Magadhan Empire and established his authority there in 190 B.C. While he was busy carving out a kingdom in India, a revolt broke out in Bactria and Eukratides set up a new dynasty there and later on advancing into Kabul and the Punjab

established his power there. The Punjab thus came to be divided into two—east of the Jhelum river formed the kingdom of Demetrois' family and the west of that river upto the limits of the Hindukush was ruled by the house of Eukratides. Menander, belonging to the royal house of Demetrois was the most important of the Indo-Greek kings. His sway extended as far as Patliputra. He was a pious Buddhist and is known as Milinda in the Buddhist tradition.

The Parthians and the Sakyas or Scythians. Simultaneously with the Bactrian revolt Parthia became independent and Arsakes set up a new dynasty there. Mithridates was the first Parthian king to invade India and to rule over the territory between the Indus and the Jhelum. The rule of the Indo-Parthians came to an end by the first century A.D.

The Sakas or the Scythians were nomadic tribes who were pushed towards India by the Yuehchi and these Sakas in their turn destroyed the Indo-Greek kingdoms and established their power there. In the middle of the second century B.C. Sakas established their rule in India—Taxila and Mathura were the centres of their northern rule, while Gujrat and Malwa were the centres of their western rule. The Western Sakas known as the Western Satraps had a regular see-saw struggle with the Andhra kings of the Deccan for a long time and later on succumbed to a more powerful attack of the Imperial Guptas. Bhumaka and Nahapan were the two important sovereigns of the Western Satraps in Gujrat, while Rudradaman was of Ujjain, Malwa. The Saka patronage of Indian art and culture is worthy of notice.

The Kushan Empire in India. The Greek rule in Bactria, Kabul and the Punjab was, as noted above, overthrown by the Sakas and the Sakas in their turn were swallowed up by the Kushans who were a section of the great nomadic race called the Yuehchi. By 40 A.D. the Kushans had established their dominance over the other tribes and their first king was Kadphises I (25-78 A.D.). His successor Kadphises II (78-120 A.D.) extended his kingdom over a good portion of northern India and governed the Indian provinces through military deputies. He was succeeded by *Kanishka* (120-162 A.D.)

who became the most important of the Kushan kings. He made Peshawar his capital and then extended his conquest as far as Banaras in the east, Turkistan in the north, and Malwa and Gujrat in the south-west. Like Asoka he was a great patron of Buddhism and convened a Buddhist Council in Kashmir that prepared an authorized version of Buddhist scriptures. During his reign Buddhism underwent transformation and its new form Mahayanism resembled Hinduism. He was a great lover of architecture and a new style of sculpture arose in his times. He constructed a relic tower at Peshawar and laid out a town, Kanishkapur. His court was adorned by a galaxy of learned men like Nagarjuna, Ashvaghosh, Vasumitra and Charak who is a celebrated authority on the Indian system of medicine. Kanishka was succeeded in 162 A.D. by his son Huvishka. But during the reign of Vasudeva, the successor of Huvishka, the decay and disintegration of the Kushan Empire began. The disappearance of the Kushan Empire in India was due to the rise of two popular branches of the Naga Dynasty.

Culture and Civilization in Mauryan Age[1]

Mauryan Administration

Nature of the Administration. The nature of the Mauryan government was enlightened despotism. The system of administration that the Mauryas instituted was a very well-organised benign autocracy. The king was not a despot like Darius of Persia. Though his will might have been the law within his empire, yet he was nonetheless a constitutional monarch bound by the common law of the Aryavarta (E. B.

1 *Early History of India* by N.N. Ghosh, pp. 135-154 ; *An Advanced History of India*, Chapter IX, pp. 124-142 ; *Ancient India* by R.C. Majumdar, Chapter IV, pp. 146-164 ; *The Cambridge History of India*, Chapter IX, pp. 474-491 ; *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. II ; *The Age of Imperial Unity*, pp. 62-70, 303-331, 542-608 ; *A Survey of Indian History* by K.M. Panikkar, Chapter III ; *History of Ancient India* by R.S. Tripathi, Chapter VIII ; *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian* by McCrindle ; *Chandragupta Maurya and His Times* by R. K. Mookarji ; *Asoka* by R.K. Mookarji ; *Political History of Ancient India* (5th Edition) by H.C. Ray-Chaudhary ; Kautilya's *Artha-Sastra* (English translation) by Shamasastry.

Havell). Again, the Mauryan king did not lay claim to divine rank. The theory of the divine rights was unknown to the Mauryas. A Mauryan king like Asoka looked upon his people as his children and assigned their care to his officers just as a mother does to a skilful nurse. It was a kind of paternal government, everything bound for the people by the king. In one record Asoka declared that whatever effort he was making was intended to discharge the debt which he owed to living beings. The Arthasastra of Kautilya lays down that the king was advised to show fatherly kindness to his people.

The Central Government : (*a*) *The king.* In the Mauryan system of administration the king was the central figure, the fountain of all power and authority. He was expected to look after everything in the state and everything needed his sanction. His duties were varied and many-folded. He went through the correspondence, looked into the details of administration, interviewed his ministers and spies, considered administrative and military measures, and took note of the happenings in the country and the town. 'The king had to be both energetic and wakeful, because it was said that if a king is energetic his subjects will be equally energetie' (Kautilya's *Arthasastra*)

The powers of the king were extensive. He was the head of justice, law and the army. His decrees were laws and he was the highest court of appeal in the empire. Appointments to the most important offices were made by the king himself and he also 'laid down the broad lines of policy and issued rescripts and codes of regulations (*Sasana dharmaniyama*) for the guidance of his officers and the people.' Though the king wielded such extensive despotic powers he was guided by the noblest ideals of beneficence and considering himself as the servant of the people he constantly strove for their welfare. "In the happiness of his subjects lies his happiness ; in their welfare, his welfare ; whatever pleases him he shall not consider as good, but whatever pleases his subjects, he shall consider good." (Kautilya's *Arthasastra*).

(*b*) *The Council of Ministers.* It was impossible for a single individual to support the Atlantean load of public administration. Therefore, the king was assisted in the discharge of his kingly duties by a small body of ministers called the *Mantrin*

or High Ministers. They were selected from among the general body of government officials called the *Amatyas* for their devotion, trustworthiness and approved service. In addition to the *Mantrins*, there was a council of advisers styled the *Parishad* or the *Mantri-parishad* who were specially consulted in times of emergency. The members of the *Mantri Parishad* also attended the king on ceremonial occasions. These advisers were recruited from all kinds of *Amatyas* or high and low officials of the state whose opinion was considered of some value on matters of public importance.

(*c*) *The Secretariate.* There was a highly organised secretariate for the conduct of State business. There were several departments. Each was under a Adhyaksha or superintendent. The Arthshastra mentions the duties of 32 superintendents in different departments. Kautilya mentions about thirty such departments which deal with all the activities of a modern government, such as education, medical relief, famine relief, revenue, irrigation, mining, etc.

(*d*) *Civil Service.* To run the government smoothly there was a very well-organised civil service. There was a grade of State officers called by the general name of *Amatyas* resembling to the officers of the modern Indian Administrative Service. There were the executive and judicial officers. They were probably specially trained for administrative services, and all higher appointments in the executive, judicial and diplomatic departments were filled by the members of this class. Greek officers of the age refer to three important classes of officers, styled district officials (Agronomi), City Commissioners (Astynomoi) and a group of officers who had the care of military affairs. In the inscriptions of Asoka there are references to *Rajukas* and *Pradesikas*. They were charged with the general welfare of *Janapadas* or country parts and *Pradesas* or districts. Asoka's inscriptions also mention *Mahamatras* or high officers who were charged with the administration of cities and sundry other matters and a large number of minor officials including clerks (*yuta*), scribes (*Lipikara*) and reporters (*Pativedaka*). 'The *Arthasastra* also mentions the official designation *Mahamatra*, *Yukta* etc. It refers to the highest officers as the eighteen *tirths*, the

chief amongst whom were the *Mantrin* (Chief Minister), *Purohita* (high priest), *yuvaraja* (heir-apparent) and *Senapati* (Commander-in-chief).' Probably they formed the inner-council or the cabinet of the king who consulted them always. Asoka created another class of officers known as *Dharma Mahamatras*. They were employed 'for the establishment of Dharma, proclamation of Dharma and for the welfare and happiness of those devoted to Dharma.' Officials were appointed by the king irrespective of caste, creed or nationality. It seems that even *Vaisyas* and *Yavanas* were freely recruited to the highest offices of the State.

Provincial Governments. The direct government of the provinces under viceroys, the basis of the Imperial system of India, is the work of the Mauryas. Their vast empire was divided into a number of provinces for administrative convenience and efficiency. The northern province (Uttarpath) had its capital at Taxila, the western province (Avantirattha) at Ujjain, the southern province (Dakshina-patha) at Suvarnagiri and the eastern province (Prachya) at Tosali (Kalinga) and the home or the Central Province at Patliputra. Each province was assigned to the prince of Royal blood or an official of the crown designated as *Kumaras*. He acted as the viceroy or the provincial governor and received detailed instructions about general policy and administration from the king. Efficient control over the provincial governors was maintained in various ways. The provinces were further sub-divided into districts and villages. The officer in charge of a district was called *Sthanika* corresponding to modern Deputy Commissioner. The village, the lowest administrative unit, was under the charge of an officer known as *Gramika*. He was both the head-man and the accountant of the village and maintained carefully a register which contained a full survey of the social and economic conditions of the people, because he was expected to supply accurate information to the State. *Gopa* was the officer in charge of ten villages. Above him was the officer called *Sthanika*. He looked after one-fourth of a district known as *janapada*. *Pradestri* and *Samaharta* were other officers who exercised general supervision over these officers.

Feudatory States. The vast and varied empire of the

Mauryas must have embraced, besides the imperial provinces, a number of conquered states left more or less autonomous on a feudatory basis. The term Sangha, applied by Kautilya to Saurashtra, Kamboja and to many other clans in the Punjab, it seems, corresponds to these non-monarchial self-governing States. Arrian makes distinct mention of cities which enjoyed a democratic form of government.

Espionage. The Mauryan Empire was a police state whose power was built upon a system of espionage. To keep watch over the conduct of the officers of the government, the State employed a large number of secret men such as detectives and news-agents. They were called the *Gudha Purushas* by Kautilya and Overseers and Inspectors by Megasthenes. Kautilya divided the spies into two groups—*Samsthah*, *i.e.*, stationary spies and *Sancharah* or wandering spies. They were stationed at the headquarters of provincial administration. Capable and trustworthy persons of approved honesty, loyalty and ability were selected for the secret service. Kautilya also recommends the employment of 'women of easy virtue' as spies and Strabo seems to confirm the fact that women or courtesans were employed by the 'City Inspectors as their co-adjutors'. 'Cipher writing was used and the services of courier pigeons were enlisted'. All this enabled the Mauryan king to maintain a close personal supervision over the administration of his officials —far and near and keep himself adequately informed of the working of his bureaucratic machinery. It ensured proper control over the administrative machinery in the provinces. However, it should be noted that the normal life of the people, though watched and reported upon, was not interfered with.

Administration of Justice. The king was the head of justice, but there were special tribunals of justice both in cities and the country, presided over by *Mahamatras* and *Rajukas.* There were two types of courts, *Dharmastheya* and *Kantaka Sodhana*, very roughly corresponding to the modern civil and criminal courts. Greek writers mention judges who listened to the cases of foreigners. Petty cases in villages were undoubtedly decided by the head-men and the village elders. Asoka seems to have introduced many reforms in judicial administration and

procedure. He tempered justice with kindness and he enjoined on the Mahamatras, the city judiciaries, to avoid causeless imprisonment and harassment of the town people. He further ordered that a respite of three days was to be granted to persons condemned to death so that his relatives might use the interval to petition for mercy to the local authorities or enable the convicts to prepare spiritually for death by 'giving alms or observing fasts'. While preserving a certain amount of uniformity in judiciary he had permitted considerable discretion to the *Rajukas* so that they could discharge their duties unperturbed. To check mal-administration and ensure judicial fairness and impartiality by his judicial officials, Asoka employed a special class of officers, a sort of inspectors of courts to conduct quinquennial or in some provinces every three years tour. In civil cases the Hindu Law as embodied in the Shastras was administered. But according to the Greek accounts, the criminal code of the Mauryas was rather severe and was sternly administered. A large number of ordinary offences like giving false evidence, evasion of government taxes, causing serious hurt to artisans and workmen were punished by mutilation and death. Judicial torture was used to extort confessions. The principle laid down was 'that those guilts believed to be true shall be subjected to torture.' There were eighteen codes of torture including seven varieties of whipping. Such a harsh criminal code had the good effect of maintaining peace and order. Moreover, according to Megasthenese, there were very few crimes and thefts were very uncommon as a result of which people left their doors unlocked.

Military Organisation. The Mauryan military was very efficiently organised, but it was in no way inspired by the Greek model. It was very well equipped and disciplined. The army was often led by the king himself. Chandragupta personally undertook the campaign against the generals of Alexander, and Asoka was an eye-witness of the terrible carnage during the war in Kalinga. It is only in the days of the last Maurya that we find a *senapati* overshadowing the king and transferring to himself the allegiance of the troops. The army of Chandragupta, according to Pliny, contained 6,00,000 infantry, 30,000 cavalry,

9,000 war elephants, besides chariots, the transport corps and the fleet. The war chariots were drawn by strong oxen and each carried two soldiers and a driver. The war elephants were specially trained for the purpose of battle. Each elephant carried three archers besides its *Mahawat.* The soldiers were equipped with swords, shields, lances, bows, javelians and buckles. 'From Greek accounts, it seems that the Mauryan army was specially strong in its cavalry and its corps of war elephants on which it depended for victory in battle.' Defensive armour was supplied by the authorities to men, elephants and horses for the battle. Kautilya mentions that there were elaborate rules and regulations for the training and drilling of soldiers and that special attention was paid by the military authorities to the sick and wounded in the army and for this purpose the army was supplemented by a contingent of doctors and nurses. The entire control of the army was in the hands of *senapati* or commander-in-chief who was directly appointed by the king and was consulted on all matters of warfare. To manage the affairs of the army there was an elaborate war office consisting of the thirty members, divided into six boards of five members each. Each of these boards responsible for one of the following departments, namely, navy, transport and commissariat, the infantry, the cavalry, the chariots and the elephants. The navy, transport and commissariat were Mauryan innovations. Harbours, ferries and ships were maintained by the State both for military and commercial purposes. The waging of war was studied as an art. In military affairs Asoka seems to have introduced great innovations. He deprecated wars and abolished even hunting. In one of his inscriptions he declared that throughout his dominions the sound of the war-drum had become the sound of the *dharma* (religious discourse). But this pacific policy of non-violence must have proved a dead weight on the martial spirit of the people, rusted the military machine and seriously impaired the morale and efficiency of the Mauryan army.

Revenues of the State. Taxes were levied both in the cash and in kind and were collected by the local officers. The land tax formed then, as now, the chief source of revenue and it was fixed at one-fourth of the gross produce. Sometimes it was one-

sixth of the produce. According to Greek writers, farmers paid, in addition to a fourth part of the produce of the soil, a land tribute because 'all India was the property of the Crown and no private person was permitted to own land.' Land taxes were collected by the *Agronomi*. His duties were to measure the land and superintend the irrigation works of his jurisdiction. Another important source of income was taxes on the sale. There was a law by virtue of which in fortified towns and cities all articles for sale (except grain, cattle and a few others) had to be brought to the toll-house near the gate, marked with an official stamp and taxed 10 per cent *ad valorem* duty after being sold—evasion being punished with death. Articles, manufactured in towns, or cities and those brought from the areas outside the towns, came under this tax. It was like the modern excise duties on local manufactures and municipal octroi duties levied in town or city. Another important source of income was excise duty on liquor. A regular system of excise license was in vogue. The income from leasing of mines, pearl fisheries, forests, cess on roads, fees on passports, revenues from crown lands, water rates, fines, taxes on gambling houses, slaughter house, professions (corresponding to the modern license fees for learned professions), fines from law courts and tolls in ferries and bridges constituted other sources of state revenues. The system of maintaining a register of births and deaths suggests the practice of levying some sort of poll-tax. The money thus obtained was largely spent by the Mauryan government on the maintenance of the emperor, his court, defences of the empire, army, salaries of the state officials and servants, allowances to artisans and others, works of public welfare and charities like hospitals, roads, rest-houses, work-houses, irrigation, religious institutions etc. The extraordinary character of the taxation system of the Mauryan Empire is that fundamentally it is not different from what exists in India to-day. It seems that it is Chanakya's revenue system that came down to the British in India and was perfected by them.

Irrigation. The Mauryan Government had constituted a regular department which looked after irrigation works, measured lands to be irrigated, regulated the supply of water to the fields where irrigation depended on canals and maintained a

system of canals. The peasants were required to pay for the water got from the canals. The construction and maintenance of canals and reservoirs had been regarded as the duty of the State. The minor irrigation works were provided and maintained by the village communities whereas the bigger canals, reservoirs and lakes were constructed and looked after by the State. The well-known *Sudarshan* lake at Girnar was constructed in Chandragupta's time under the supervision of Provincial Governor, Pushya Gupta and the lake was provided with supplemental channels by the Governor Tushashpha in the days of the Emperor Asoka.

Public Works. Among the various departments of the Mauryan government there was one called the road department. It constructed roads, kept them in good order, looked after the watering places, the dharamsalas or rest-houses for pilgrims and travellers and provided for construction of bridges over the rivers. Rules were laid down concerning the correct width of different kinds of roads. Usually cattle-traces and paths used by the pedestrians were required to be four to six feet in width ; the roads for the use of chariots and other wheeled traffic were wide enough. They were ordinarily paved with stones or planks of palm-trees. They were as much as thirty two feet wide and some of the trunk roads were even twice that width. Milestones and sign boards at every ten stadia (2000 yards) were set upon public roads to show the by-roads, turnings and distances. Roads were further provided with shady groves and wells by Asoka who also built hospitals both for men and other living creatures.

Municipal Administration. One may think that the all embracing activities of the Mauryan Imperial government left little scope for self-government or popular initative. Nevertheless it is a fact that there was a certain amount of decentralisation notably in the spheres of local government, legislation and administration of justice in the rural areas. There did exist autonomous communities in Mauryan India and classical writers do refer to self-governing cities. The important affairs of the imperial capital Patliputra itself were conducted by a body of their commissioners who had formed themselves into

six committees or boards of five each. The first board controlled the industries and handicrafts of the city. It fixed wages, enforced laws for sound materials and looked after the artisans. The second board was in charge of making arrangements for visitors and foreigners who came to the city on business. It looked to their comforts and provided them with accommodation. The third board was charged with registration of births and deaths—vital statistics in a register. The fourth regulated the sales of produce, weights and measures and regularly issued licences to merchants, who had to pay taxes. The fifth performed smaller duties concerning manufactured goods and minutely saw that old things were not sold for new ones. It supervised manufacture and sale of commodities. The sixth and the last was charged with the duty of collecting tithes (a tax of one-tenth) on all goods sold in the city. Besides these functions which the boards separately discharged, a separate set of officials supervised the village government and the commissioners in their collective capacity had charge of all matters concerning the public welfare such as maintenance and repairs of public works, markets, harbours, temples, medical relief, sanitation, water-supply etc.

It is supposed that the municipal administration of other big cities such as Taxila and Ujjain followed the model of Patliputra. Kautilya mentions that there was an officer-in-charge of the city called the *Nagaraka* or the Town Prefect (modern Executive Officer). His existence in the Mauryan period is further proved by Asoka's Kalinga edicts. "The perfection of the arrangements," remarks Dr. Vincent Smith, "thus indicated, is astonishing even when exhibited in outline." A glance at the departmental details for local self-government as described in Kautilya's *Arthasastra* further increases our wonder that such a municipal organisation could have been successfully planned and efficiently worked out in India in 300 B. C. It is doubtful if any of the ancient Greek cities were better organised and governed.

Census. Both Megasthenes and the *Arthasastra* mention that there was a permanent department of the Mauryan State for taking annual census of the population with a view to levy tax

and know the number of births and deaths. The village officers and the census department were to record the number of the persons of all castes residing in each village, to count the farmers, cowherds, traders, slaves, artisans, the young and the old men of each family to find out their profession, average income and expenditure and ascertain their conduct and character. The town officers called *Nagaraka* recorded the census in the towns and cities. A record of immigration and emigration of foreigners and the suspicious characters was also regularly maintained by the census department. Economically the importance of the census with all its details regarding the kinds of land, professions of the people, their average income and expenditure, number of persons in a family, merchants and their business etc., was really very great as it rendered valuable aid to the taxation and a reliable index to the material condition and subsequent progress of the people.[1]

Public Health. The Mauryan Government took great care to secure and maintain the health of the people. Megasthenes observes that even foreigners were looked after very carefully and nursed tenderly whenever they were sick and buried respectfully when they were dead. Kautilya informs us that adequate provisions were made by the state-Government for medical treatment. There were hospitals with extensive rich store-rooms. Animal hospitals were also built. Sick men and animals were looked after and the old nursed. Medical herbs for drugs were planted in fields and pots and supplied where needed. *Arthasastra* refers to ordinary physicians, surgeons with surgical instruments and appliances and materials for bandages, nurses, mid-wives and trained physicians especially skilled in detecting poison. Adequate arrangement was also made for the postmortem examination of a corpse which was smeared with certain oil to prevent its decomposition. All cases of violent death caused by suffocation, accident, hanging or poisoning were immediately brought to the morgue and carefully examined and attended by medical officers. The *Arthasastra* mentions that to safeguard and maintain the health of the people the state laid down rigid laws for punishing the cases of adulteration of

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1 *Early History of India* by N. Ghosh, p. 151.

grains, oils, alkalies, salts, scents and medicines. Equally stringent were the sanitary measures to preserve the health of the people in cities and crowded places. Efforts were made to keep the streets clean. There were rules saying that those who threw dirt on the streets or caused mud or water to collect on the public thoroughfares would be fined. Creating nuisance near temples, sacred places, Government buildings, places of pilgrimage and in reservoirs of water was a crime to be penalised. Throwing or putting careasses of animals or dead bodies of human beings inside the city or town was punished with fines. If the dead bodies were carried through gates or along paths not meant for the purpose or were buried outside the crematories, the Government considered it a violation of the sanitary regulations and it was visited with punishment.

Conclusion. The Mauryan State created a machinery which attempted to govern directly over vast areas and to enforce rules and regulations in respect of agriculture, industry, commerce, animal husbandry etc. There was a highly organised system of administration under a powerful bureaucracy at the centre, though much room was left for the local self-government. The very fact that the government devoted itself not merely to the collection of revenues but to control productive and commercial activities was a significant change from the earlier system of government. The Mauryan system of state organisation endured with much change through ages. The Hindu kings to the last followed the organisation of the Mauryan Empire in its three essential aspects, the revenue system, the bureaucracy and the police. The organisation, as it existed, was taken over by the Muslim kings and later on from them by the British. If the present Indian administration is analysed to its bases, the principles and practices of the Mauryan State-organisation will be found to be still in force.[1]

Social Conditions

General prosperity of the people. From the accounts of Megasthenes we learn that the people were happy and prosperous. On the whole they were self-sufficient. *The Greeks wondered at the "fertility of the soil, magnitude of the rivers, the*

A Survey of Indian History, p. 37.

richness and variety of the minerals, the vegetable and the animal world in India." *Not only the necessities of life but all the amenities of social life were also available to the people.* Life was a synthetic whole in which religion and materialism were happily and successfully blended together.

High morals and simple tone of Society. Megasthenes' observations reveal to us noble simplicity and a high standard of social and personal morality among the Indians of his times. People lived frugally and observed good order. They possessed a noble simplicity of character and marked intellectual powers. They were truthful, honest and brave and were seldom or never convicted of lying. Their laws were very simple and they were not litigious. They did not file suits about pledges or deposits nor did they require seals or witnesses, but they safely and freely made their deposits and confided it each other. Thefts were rare and the houses and property were generally left unguarded. People never drank wine except at the occasion of sacrifice. Their food was principally a rice pottage. Rice had become the staple food. They were singularly free from diseases because of their simplicity in diet and the abstinence from wine. The moral teachings of Asoka had a healthy effect on the people. Life had become much more austere. The contemporary literature as well as the Edicts of Asoka reveal that there was an almost universal belief in *papa* (sin), *punya* (charity), *parloka* (life hereafter) and *swarga* (heaven). This kept the average man on the path of righteousness.

Social customs and manners. Slavery was an established institution in society. It was recognised not only by the lawbooks and the literature on polity, but was expressly referred to in inscriptions of the times. Asoka marked a distinction between a slave and a hired labourer and suggested kind treatment for all. According to Megasthenes, "all Indians are free and not one of them is a slave." But probably Megasthenes was not aware of slavery in society, because in India it was mild and limited as compared with that prevailing among the Greeks. The custom of *Sati* among women was not very common. It was confined to Taxila and to the Kathaei of the Punjab.

Amusements. People celebrated many festivals and rejoiced

considerably. The Lichchavis celebrated *Sabbarattivars* with great rejoicings. There are references about the celebration of *Vasantotsava* (the Spring festival), Dipavali, Giripuja, etc. Flower festivals are also alluded to. In fact the change of seasons was always an occasion to be celebrated with appropriate amusements and gatherings. Dicing was almost a universal habit and gambling houses were licenced and controlled by the government Ball games were favoured by women and in the women's garden *Kanduka Krida* (playing at balls) is often alluded to. Hunting also had been a popular pastime. Boating, swimming and archery were other manly games in which youths tried to excel each other. Fights between men and elephants and other animals are described by Arrian who also mentioned chariot races with teams of oxen and horses. It seems that animal fights between bulls, rams, elephants and rhinoceroses were popular. The combats of men and animals often led to shedding of blood and therefore, later on, Asoka forbade such combats and introduced instead spectacles of heavenly scenes which would provide both entertainment and moral instructions. Buddhist writers have referred to games on wooden boards with eight or ten rows of squares from which probably chess play ultimately evolved. *Samajas* (merry-gatherings) were often held in honour of a deity, *e. g.*, Brahma, Pasupati-Siva or Sarasvati. A salient feature of some of these gatherings was a joust of arms in which wrestlers from distant regions participated freely. The amusements aimed at a joy for life and a joy of life.

Apart from this, singing, dancing and instrumental music were widely cultivated and *Veena* was frequently played upon. Travelling companies occasionally sang, acted and danced to the villagers. Teachers of *natya* (dance) suffered a social stigma from the caste-point of view, but the teachers employed by the rulers held important and influential position at court. Among the sixty-four arts which a well-educated man was supposed to know dancing and music ranked high and men and women of all classes were enjoined to study them.

Social classes. The caste-system was becoming more rigid compared to that of the previous age. Though Megasthenes makes no mention of the fourfold divisions of the caste system,

yet *varna* (caste) and *asrama* (periods or stages of religious discipline), the two characteristic institutions of the Hindu social polity reached a definite stage in the Mauryan period. Megasthenes points out that no one was allowed to marry out of his own caste or to follow any calling or art except his own or change his profession or trade ; for example a soldier could neither become a farmer, nor an artisan, nor a philosopher. The inscriptions of Asoka mention householders and wandering ascetics. Kautilya's *Arthasastra* describes the four Asramas and the duties assigned to each. It enumerates the virtues which should be cultivated in common in all the four Asramas. The system of the *asramas* was thus well established in the Mauryan age. However, the choice was left to every individual, who was not forced either to lead a householder's life or to renounce it against his will. Megasthenes points out that the population was divided into seven classes—namely philosophers, husbandmen, herdsmen and hunters, traders and artisans, soldiers, secret inspectors or overseers and councillors. It seems that Megasthenes is confused between castes and classes of men engaged in different occupations. He mixed castes with professions. In fact, rigidity of castes seems to have greatly slackened in the time of Asoka when Buddhism was the dominant religion in the country. Moreover, the growth of heterodox sects and creeds, the evolution of complex rituals, the influx of foreigners and many other causes affected to a certain extent the rigidity of the caste-system. However, matrimonial alliances between different groups took place. Kautilya informs us that some of the mixed castes were the fruits of intermarriage between different castes.

Women. Greek writers and contemporary epigraphs throw light on the position of women. Some of them pursued the study of philosophy and lived a life of continence. But married women were denied the privilege of sharing with their husbands a knowledge of the sacred lore. As the nuns—both Buddhist and Jain—were freely initiated and wandered about all over the country with free access to palaces and cottages, it seems that considerable freedom was permitted to women. Polygamy was practised especially by rulers and noblemen. The care of

the king's person was entrusted to women. There is a reference that the protection of Chandragupta Maurya's person was entrusted to an Amazonian body-guard of armed women. Asoka mentions that women were particularly given to the performance of many trivial and worthless ceremonies. They took delight in the practice of ritual. The fact that the wife took a prominent share in religious activities by the side of her husband is clear from the record of the benefactions of Karuvaki, the second queen of Asoka himself. (*An Advanced History of India*, pp. 132-133). Offences against women of all kinds were severely punished, including the actions of officials in charge of workshops and prisons. The offence of killing a woman was equal to that of killing a Brahman.

Education. Education in the Mauryan times was fairly and widely spread. Schools and higher educational institutions were maintained by state and public charities. Teaching was primarily the duty of Brahmans, but after Buddha's time, the Buddhist monks seem to have assumed a large share in educating the masses. But there still continued the orthodox system of studying under a suitable renowned teacher or in the case of aristocratic class of employing a suitable tutor for the children. The universities of Taxila, Ujjain and Banaras were even famous as seats of learning, but their education seems to have been mainly literary and religious. The *Dharma-sastras*, grammar and rhetoric, and *Varta* (politics and economics) were widely studied by the people and they were included in the essential courses. From the time of Panini (sixth century B.C.) great importance was attached to the study of grammar and it was supposed to be a primary course of study. Asoka's edicts indicates that literacy prevailed among the common people and Megasthenes also witnessed that education was widely spread in Mauryan times. Strabo quotes Nearchos as saying that Indians wrote on pieces of closely woven linen, while Curtius informs us that the bark of trees was used for writing on. Though we have not much direct evidence about women's education, but the establishment of nunneries must have carried education to women folk. Technical education was given through guilds.

Economic Conditions

Condition of Peasantry. The common people of the Mauryan times seem to have been classified into three main classes : (1) husbandmen, herdsmen and hunters, (2) traders and (3) artisans. Husbandmen or farmers formed the most numberous class of the population. They were a prosperous class in society. They were happy and contented and were exempted from fighting and other public services and devoted the whole of their time to cultivation. They were regarded as public benefactors, a sacred class, and were not molested in times of war and conflict. They paid into the government treasury one-fourth share of the produce of the soil besides a land tribute. In time of emergency they had to pay benevolences but such imposts were levied on rare occasions. (*An Advanced History of India*, p. 135)

The rural areas were exposed to danger from flood, fire and locusts against which the Mauryan State had both preventive and relief measures. As a general precautionary measure against famine and scarcity government store-houses were set up to provide for emergencies. The State was to provide, in times of distress, the cultivators with seeds and food and start relief works. As a precautionary measure against floods during the rainy season the people were made to remove from the banks of the river, tank or lake in due time and every possible help or relief was offered to them. Provisions were also made by the government to kill rats, locusts, injurious insects, wild beasts and birds to save crops from destruction. The State also laid down precautionary measures to protect life and property against fire. The measures consisted of ten remedical instruments (*Dasamulisamgraha*), such as many pots, a water vessel, a ladder, an axe, a hook to pull down burning pieces of wood and ropes etc.[1] Implements for agriculturists were made by the artisans who were not only exempted from taxation but received certain allowances from the royal exchequer. In return for these concessions they had to render to the State certain prescribed services."

Trade and Industry. Besides the agriculture, which was the

[1] *Studies in Ancient Indian Polity* by N. N. Low, pp. 73-103.

main profession, trade and industry flourished well. The economic prosperity of the country was at a high level and many arts, crafts and occupations developed well. The fact that one committee of the municipal board of Patliputra was entrusted with the supervision of manufactured articles in the metropolis indicates existence of the manufacturing industries in the Mauryan period. Greek writers also refer to the manufacture of chariots, waggons, arms and agricultural implements and the building of ships. Metals like bronze, copper, tin, lead were wrought and worked successfully. Strabo mentions dresses worked in gold and adorned with precious stones and also flowered robes made of fine muslin. The finest kind of muslins were produced in the valley of the lower Ganges and muslins in great quantity were exported from several market towns of southern India. The North-West was reputed for its cotton cloth and silk yarn. The weaving industry flourished well and employed hundreds of helpless women. Weavers and other handicraftsmen were organised into guilds or trade-unions or economic corporations styled *Srenis*. The *Srenis* or guilds were powerful institutions. They had judicial legislative and executive power. The Sanchi *Stupa* inscription, for example, mentions that the carving was made by the guild of the ivory workers of Vidisa. There are references about the guilds of weavers, braziers, oil-millers, bamboo-workers, corn-dealers, and of artisans fabricating hydraulic engines. These corporations often served the purpose of modern banks, received permanent deposits and devoted the annual interest for specific charities. The organisation of industry in guilds gave to craftsmen great political and economic power. There were also marchant guilds under their chiefs called Setthis. The organisation of the guilds which exercised many governmental functions is one of the factors that the social historians of India have been underestimating. Flourishing industries stimulated internal and external trade, sea-borne and river-borne. For internal trade, which was carefully regulated and encouraged, ferries were maintained and a system of safe communications developed all over the Mauryan empire. Provision was made for ware-houses, godowns and transport and special arrangements were made for the protection of the trade routes. There were many highways

and trade routes. There was the Great Royal Highway, the precursor of the Grand Trunk Road, more than a thousand miles in length connecting the capital Patliputra with Taxila and the north-west frontier. Another long road of great commercial importance ran through Kasi and Ujjain and linked the capital with the great sea-ports of Western India. Another good road was constructed for the purpose of inland commerce connecting the port of Tamralipti, at the mouth of the Ganges, with Patliputra. On either side of the road banyan and mango trees were planted to give shade to man and beast ; at every half *Kos* wells were sunk ; rest-houses were erected and many watering places were provided for the travellers and animals.[1] Apart from their strategic value these great land-routes considerably fostered the growth of trade and commerce and cities like Taxila, Ujjain, Kausambi, Kasi and Patliputra, where different routes met, became great centres of trade both internal and external. Punch-marked coins, with some symbols and devices but no royal names, were used for the purpose of exchange ; cowrie shells served as currency for small transactions. Weights and measures were also well regulated.

Navigation. The Mauryan period witnessed the development of maritime traffic and overseas trade. Chandragupta Maurya maintained a separate department of admiralty. The Board of shipping was one of the great departments of the State. At the head of it was the minister who dealt with all matters relating to shipping including navigation of seas. Under him there was a staff of commissioner, harbour masters etc. whose duty it was to look after ships in distress. The Mauryan government built ships and let them out on hire for the transport of merchandise. Ships and boats, large as well as small, were used for navigation, and rivers were crossed by either boats or rafts of wood. With the conquest of Kalinga and the control of the great ports of the Kalingan coast maritime activity clearly gained greater importance as is evidenced by the fact of Asoka's own daughter, Sanghamitra, being allowed to travel by sea to Ceylon. Besides this, Mauryan India had already esta-

Asoka's Pillar, Edict VII and Rock Edict 11.

blished direct relations with Syria, Egypt and other countries of the Hellenistic West and as early as the first century B. C. contact was established between India and the Roman Empire. Moreover, there was a considerable body of foreign residents in Patliputra. Many of them were in all probability traders visiting the capital in connection with their commercial transactions. Again, classical writers bear testimony to the vigorous activity and daring of the Indian navigators who sailed abroad. All this indicated a brisk external trade and vigorous maritime activities by the Indians. Sweet fine wines, pigments, glass vessels, costly vessels of silver, singing boys and beautiful maidens for the harem, precious stones, thin clothing and the choicest ointment were some of the articles imported in India, while India exported articles of luxury including fine silks, muslin, spices, perfumes, scents, medicinal herbs, indigo, sandalwood, pearls, precious stones, ivory, iron, steel etc.

Rise of Capitalism. The general tranquility, the increase of trade and commerce inside the country, the development of maritime enterprise and overseas trade led to the growth of material prosperity and subsequently the rise of capitalism. There are epigraphic records of the great wealth in Mauryan India. The inscriptions on the Sanchi Stupa record numerous gifts by very wealthy merchants (*sresthin*). Names of merchants who undertook expensive repairs are also mentioned. Great endowments for vihars or monasteries and temples were very common. The Buddhists and Jain chronicles bear witness to the great wealth of the mercantile classes of the Mauryan period. There were commercial companies for large scale business. Money was lent on interest but the government regulated rates of interest charged by money-lenders. According to the *Arthasastra* the highest legal rate of interest was 15 percent per year.

The Urban Life. Towns were numerous. The imperial Patliputra was a magnificent town built on the confluence of the Sone and the Ganges. It had the shape of a parallelogram and was about nine miles in length and more than one and a half miles in breadth. It was surrounded by a huge wall of bricks with wooden palisades in which there were 64 gates and

370 towers. It was protected by a deep moat 600 feet in width and was filled with the water from the Sone river. The Sugangeya palace, the seat of the king, was centrally situated and is stated by Megasthenes to have been more magnificent than the palaces of Susa and Ecbatana. The city's river frontage, the beauty of its parks and the regal splendour of its buildings have been proverbial. The *kathasarit sagar* speaks of Patliputra as the city of flowers, the home of learning, culture, wealth and fine arts and 'the queen of the cities of the world'. The city had been completely cosmopolitan in its character. Other cities, only less important than Patliputra, like Vaisali, Ujjain, Banaras and Taxila shared equally in the prosperity of the period.

'The growth of towns and amenities of life in the cities led to the popularity of urban life among richer classes. The *nagarika* or town-man became a type with well-developed tastes, special codes of conduct, leading a life of luxury and devoted to a life of enjoyment.' Vatsyayana's description of the life of the *nagarika* gives us a picture of the condition of the urban culture at that time. The houses in the town were generally surrounded by a garden with seats, bowers, flowering plants and fruit trees. There were terraces for the enjoyment of moonlight parties. The rooms were elegantly furnished both for comfort and enjoyment. Ivory brackets were used for keeping such articles as painting boxes, musical instruments, etc. A table was provided for toilet articles and carpets were used for chairs. The room was decorated with flowers, and outside on the verandah the pet birds and animals were kept. A *nagarika* was elegantly dressed, his clothes were mildly perfumed, collyrium was applied to his eyes, his lips were reddened by a dye, his upper garment was of coloured silk, laced or otherwise, and was usually of fine texture. Ornaments of different shapes artistically fashioned added to the costume. The quality of the garment was often a test of a man's culture and standing. (*A Survey of Indian History*, pp. 46-48)

Megasthenes remarks that town people were skilled in arts, dress and jewellery. "They love finery and ornaments. Their robes are worked in gold and ornamented with precious stones and they also wear flowered garments made of the finest muslin."

Massaging of the body seems to have been extensively practised by the people and a *nagarika* usually did not neglect active exercises which kept his body vigorous and shapely. He took two principal meals daily. Apart from such staple food as rice, wheat, barley and milk, meat formed an important and popular article of food. Buddhist literature also alludes frequently to the eating of meat. When a *nagarika* was at super a table was placed before him, this being like a tripod. There was placed upon it a golden bowl into which first rice was put and then many dainties were added. Different varieties of food were taken by the persons of the leisured classes.[1] Different sorts of wine—sweet (*madhu*) and dry (*asava*)—were also in common use. In fact wine-drinking was popular but its sale was well-regulated.

The above picture of the urban life was that of the leisured wealthy classes who loved the pleasure of life, enjoyed festivals and ceremonies, diverted themselves with music, entertainments and other pastimes and patronised liberally public places of amusements. The life of a man of the middle class was also civilized, balanced and materially advanced. He lived in comfortable houses and refined cultivated surroundings. He followed religious rituals and routine that gave him spiritual satisfaction, comfort and an assured position in society. His domestic and social life was well organised and regulated by a code which found general acceptance. He enjoyed the benefits of being the citizen of a highly prosperous empire. The necessities and even the luxuries and the amenities of the civilized life were all available to him. Though the life of an ordinary average man in the village usually bore no relation to the rich, luxurious urban life, but it is significant of the highly sophisticated civilisation that had grown in town as a result of centuries of material prosperity and peaceful settled rule.

Religion. In the days of the Imperial Mauryas the worship of the Vedic gods was still far from obsolescent. Indra and Varuna continued to be evoked. But side by side with them appear other deities whose popularity dates from the epic

Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian by J.W. McCrindle.

period. They are Vishnu, Siva and Sun. The river Ganges is also referred to as an object of worship by classical writers. Serpent deities or Nagas were worshipped by some. Vasudeva is mentioned in Panini and though the Krishna-cult assumed importance only later, Bal-Rama his brother was already the object of worship in the third century B.C. Patanjali refers to the exhibition and sale of images of Siva, Skanda and Visakha by the Mauryas.

Sacrifices were much in common during this age. They were offered by king as well as private persons and the services of "philosophers" were requisitioned for the purpose. Asoka tried to put a stop to the killing of living creatures on such occasions. He did not care for rituals but greatly valued the fundamental virtues of truth, purity, righteousness, saintliness and gentleness. He prescribed benevolent attitude towards all men, reverence for all religious and non-injury to living creatures. Later on the Vaishnava reformers attempted to spiritualise the Vedic rite of sacrifices by giving them a new ethical meaning. A great Brahmanic revival followed after the fall of the Maurya Dynasty and rites like the *Asvamedha* and *Vajapeya* came to be celebrated by princes and people on a grand scale under the Sungas and Kanvas.

The principal religious sects were the Brahmans, Buddhists and Jains. Besides these, there were the yogis, hermits, ascetics, Parivrajakas and Ajivikas. According to tradition Chandragupta embraced Jainism and Asoka Buddhism. The rival sect of the Ajivikas enjoyed, like many other denominations, the bounty of the emperor Asoka and Dasaratha. They granted cave dwellings for the Ajivikas.

Buddhism had become the most popular religion under the patronage of Asoka. It received, later on, marked favour from Menander and converted Kanishka to its fold. But the Buddhism of Kanishka differed much from the simple ethical creed of the great Maurya Asoka. Another sect which was steadily gaining ground was *Bhagavataism* or vaishnavism which lays stress on devotion or Bhakti. Side by side, a different sect of Brahmanism called Saivism was also flourishing.

Literary activity. It is difficult to assign any exact Indian

work of wide fame definitely to the Mauryan age. "Three works, the Kautilya's *Arthasastra*, the *Kalpasutra* of Bhadrabahu and the Buddhist *Katha Vatthu* are traditionally attributed to personages who are said to have flourished in the Mauryan period. Some parts of the Mahabharat and the Ramayan were probably composed during the Maurya or early post-Maurya period. Some assign the composition of *Manavadharma Sastra* to this period." The growth of Sanskrit is one of the major factors which makes the Mauryan period a basic one in Indian civilisation. Panini's (Circa Sixth century B. C.) *Astadhyayi* marks the turning point in Sanskrit. It becomes the "perfected language", and Panini provided Sanskrit with a grammar, which remains the model even today for grammarians. During the period 500-150 B. C. we have the great works of Katyayan and Patanjali who between them established the supremacy of Panini and gave to Sanskrit the form and shape which it enjoys today.

The Mauryan Art[1]

The Mauryan period is a great land-mark in the history of the Indian art. We possess no ancient monuments that deserve any serious consideration so far the Indian art before the Mauryas is concerned. It is only in the age of Emperor Asoka that we come across monuments of high quality in a large number. They enable us to form a definite idea about the extent and nature of the Indian art. In fact the history of the Indian art begins with the advent of the Mauryas. The Mauryan Emperors were marvellous builders. They erected magnificent buildings and other artistic stone monuments some of which have survived till today. They deserve to be included among the finest specimens of ancient art.

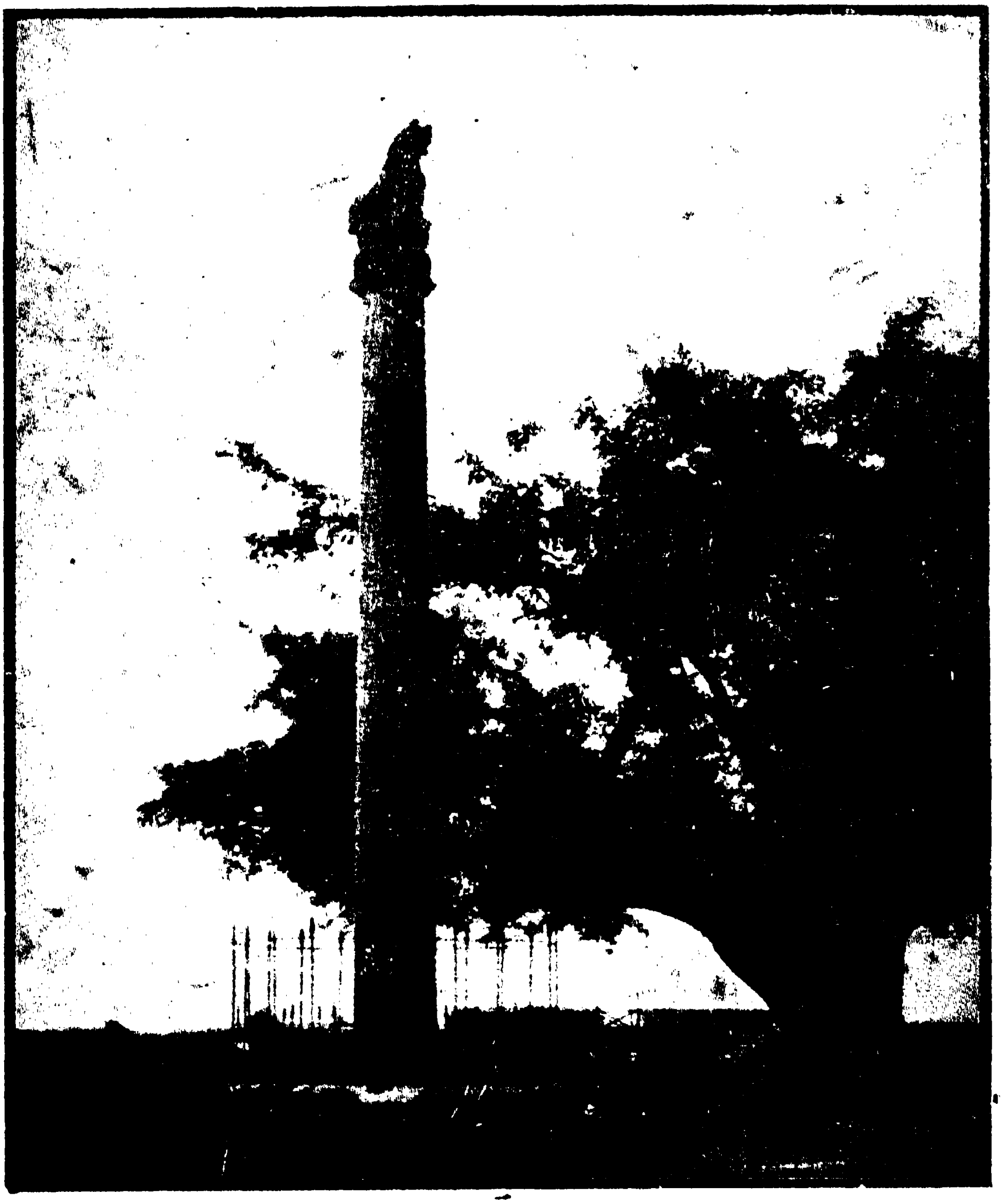
The buildings, palaces and monuments of Emperor Chandragupta Maurya have perished as they were mostly made of wood. But the stone monuments of Asoka have defied the ravages of time and they form the earliest artistic record of Indian civilisation yet discovered. The buildings prior to Asoka were mostly built of wood. The general use of stone dates from Asoka. 'The technical perfection of Indian stone-work of the

1 *Maurya and Sunga Art* by Nihar Ranjan Ray ; *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* by V. A. Smith.

Asokan age indicates a mature form of art pre-supposing a masonic tradition many centuries old.' The perfection which the art of sculpture attained during this period suggests that it had a long period of continuous and steady development. In fact, some of the older European scholars were led to note that the history of Indian art of later period is only the history of its decay.

Asokan sculpture and architecture. The artistic remains of the Asokan period may be described under the following heads :—1. Stupas, 2. Pillars, 3. Palaces, and 4. Caves.

1. *Stupas.* A stupa is a solid domical structure of brick or stone, resting on a round base. It is surmounted with a shaft and an umbrella, the symbol of spiritual sovereignty. Some times a stupa was surrounded by a plain or ornamented stone railing running all round having one or more gate-ways, which were often of highly elaborate pattern and decorated with rich sculptures. The main object of erecting a stupa was to enshrine some relics of Buddha or of a great Buddhist saint or to commemorate some sacred place. Therefore, a stupa acquired a sort of religious sanctity. It developed into a religious edifice where candles and flowers were offered for religious merits. Tradition credits Asoka with building 84,000 stupas, all over India and Afghanistan. In the 7th century A. D. when Hieun Tsang visited India, he observed quite a large number of them all over India and Afghanistan, but now most of them have entirely perished. Some of them, enclosed and enlarged at later times by the people and the princes alike, perhaps still exist. The most famous example of these is the big stupa at Sanchi, near Bhopal not far away from Bhelsa in Madhya Bharat. The diameter of the Sanchi *stupa* is 121½ feet, the height about 77½ feet and the massive stone railing that surrounds it is 11 feet in height. 'According to Sir John Marshall, the original brick stupa built by Asoka was probably of not more than half the present dimensions which were subsequently enlarged by the addition of a stone casing faced with concrete.' The older and smaller railing was replaced by the present railing. A similar fate gradually has possibly overtaken many other stupas of Emperor Asoka and later on with the decline of Buddhism the stupa structure dwindled.



Asoka's Pillar—Allahabad

2. *Pillars.* The monolithic pillars or *Lats* set up by Asoka furnish, perhaps, the finest, the most beautiful and characteristic specimens of the remains of the Asokan art. These Asokan pillars are a triumph of engineering, architecture and sculpture. Huge and entire pieces of fine-grained sand-stone were chiselled into the shape of these pillars. Each pillar weighed about fifty tons and was about fifty feet high. They were carried hundreds of miles from the Chunar quarries, and sometimes to the top of a hill. V. A. Smith remarks that their conveyance and erection are proofs that engineers and stone-cutters of Asoka's age were not inferior in skill and resource to those of any country or time.

There are three parts of a monolithic pillar, *viz.*, the prop under the foundation, the shaft and the capital. The prop is buried in the ground. There are some figures of peacocks engraved on the stone foundations. These figures are said to indicate that Chandragupta's father was a keeper of peacocks.

The shaft or the column of the pillar fifty feet in height was made of one piece of sand-stone. It supports a capital made of another single piece of stone. The round and slightly tapering shaft is highly polished and very graceful in its proportions. Its glass-like lustre is still retained. Moreover, the high stature and massive look of the shaft impress us with the great building skill of its makers.

The third part of the pillar, *i.e.*, capital, consists of : (a) some finely executed one or more animal figure such as the lion or the elephant, (b) the sacred *Dharmachakra* symbol engraved with sculptures in relief, and (c) the inverted lotus. Some writers considered this lotus to be the Presepolitan Bell. But it seems more plausible to conclude that it is the traditional Indian flower, the lotus. As noted above, extraordinary technical skill was shown in cutting and chiselling the stone into a pillar with wonderful accuracy and in imparting the lustrous polish to the whole surface of the pillar. But these pale into insignificance before the high artistic merits or the animal figures of the capital, which display a vibrant spirit and exhibit realistic modelling and movement of a very high order. The capital of the Sarnath Pillar is undoubtedly the most magnificent and has been

declared the finest piece of sculpture and the best of the series. The wonderful life-like figures of the four lions standing back to back, and the smaller graceful and stately figures of animals in relief on the abacus, all indicate a highly advanced form of art and their remarkable beauty, majesty and vigour have evoked unanimous applause from all critics of art. Sir John Marshall considers these lions as masterpieces in point of the style and technique. Dr. V. A. Smith makes the following observation on the Sarnath capital.

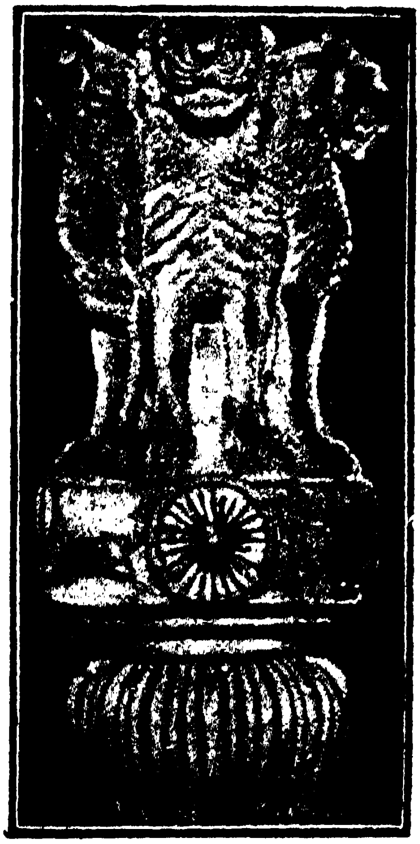
"It would be difficult to find in any country an example of ancient sculpture or even equal to this beautiful work of art, which successfully combines realistic modelling with ideal dignity and is finished in every detail with perfect accuracy."

3. *Palaces.* Asoka built many palaces. Greek writers of the age refer to magnificent palaces in Patliputra and consider them as the finest and the grandest in the whole world. Some seven hundred years later when Fahien, the Chinese pilgrim, visited India, the Mauryan edifices inspired awe and admiration in his heart. He was so much wonder-struck at the sight of Asoka's palace at Patliputra that he believed that the palace could not have been constructed by human hands but by the spirits which Asoka employed.[1] But these noble buildings of the Mauryan monarchs have utterly perished. Recent excavations on the site have laid bare the ruins of some of these buildings, the most wonderful being those of the hundred-pillared hall.

4. *Caves.* The caves were cut out of hard and refractory rocks. Their interior walls are so well polished that they shine like mirrors. They are wonderful monuments of patient skill and infinite labour. They were meant to be residences for monks and also served the purpose of churches and assembly halls. Asoka and his grandson Dasaratha got several such cave-dwellings built. A lot of such caves are found on the Nagarjuna Hills and the Barabar Hills near Gaya. One of the caves in the Barabar Hills called the Sudama Cave was dedicated by Asoka to the monks of the Ajivika sect.

The Mauryan Sculpture. The majestic figures of lions,

Fa-hien by Legge, p. 77.



Capital of Asoka's Pillar at Sarnath.

stately houses and graceful deer on the Asokan pillars speak highly of the Mauryan sculpture. Besides these figures, the Yaksa statues discovered at Didarganj, Parkham (near Mathura), Patna and Besnagar (Bhilsa in Madhya Bharat) and some images of the Jain Tirthankars reveal an indigenous technique in sculpture which had attained considerable maturity in the Mauryan period. Their chief characteristics are 'archaic stiffness', simplification of form and massive volume.

The salient features of the Mauryan Art. The Mauryan art has its own leading features. It is individualistic in its essential character and ideology.[1] It was patronised by the Mauryan court. Its important function was to impress and overawe the populace with the power and majesty of its patrons—the Mauryan Emperors. It lacked deeper roots in the collective social will, taste and preference. It existed with and within the limits of the powerful Mauryan court and therefore it was destined to have an isolated and short life. 'However, the monolithic pillars combine the dignified and massive simplicity of the shaft with the exquisite and skilful carving of animal figures on their capitals. They reveal a sense of precision and exactitude of the stone-cutter inasmuch as these huge pieces were cut from a single block of stone.' The beauty, proportions and attention to minor details evinced in the capitals, specially the lion capitals, testify to the exquisite technical skill in sculpture art attained in the Mauryan period. The Mauryan craftsman plied his chisel with wonderful precision, accuracy and produced remarkable effects. In fact his execution was masterly and his artistic capabilities were magnificently displayed. The cave chapels, cut down from solid granite rocks by artisans, have a style of their own which is equally chaste and severe. The polish and the skill with which the artisans used their style to impart brilliancy to these stone monuments is another feature of the art. It excites both curiosity and applause. V.A. Smith rightly remarks that the Mauryan art is mainly Indian, both in spirit and execution.

Conclusion. It will not be an exaggeration if we call the Mauryan age a brilliant period, no less than a golden period

[1] *History and Culture of the Indian People*, Vol. II, p. 510.

in Indian history. It was for the first time in the history that the whole of the northern India was under a very efficient and centralized government, the basic principles of which are even followed by the present government of India. There was peace and order and material prosperity in the whole of the country. India's prestige was raised in the eye of the foreigners. The world owes a huge debt to one of the Mauryan kings, Asoka. He is the only king in the history of the world who gave up war after victory and attempted to banish war entirely from the world—a fore-runner of the United Nations' Organisation. He not only gave to the world the lessons of religious toleration but placed before the world the model of an ideal king. The Mauryan contribution to Indian culture has been unique. The Mauryan stupas, pillars, edicts, etc. gave to the country a visible unity of culture. The Mauryan kings patronised arts and religion and consequently architecture and sculpture attained a very high level of excellence. Trade and commerce flourished well and enhanced the material prosperity of the people. In brief, it may be observed that the century and a half of Mauryan rule witnessed a growth of civilisation, art and culture, which entitled India to rank among the greatest countries of the time.

Life in the Sunga-Satavahana-Saka Age[1]

As mentioned above in the beginning of this chapter the Mauryan Emperors were succeeded in Magadha by the Sunga and Kanva rulers, while the Greeks, the Parthians, the Sakas and the Kushanas ruled the north-west frontier. Two of the Saka principalities were in Northern India, with Mathura and Takshila as their capitals, the third comprised Malwa and Kathiawar in Western India. The Saka rulers called themselves Satraps. The Saka monarchs of Malwa and Kathiawar, known as the Western Satraps, ruled for three centuries. In the trans-Vindhyan India a new power was rising under the Satavahans

For more details see *Early History of the Dekkan* by R. G. Bhandarkar, Secs. VI to VII, pp. 42-76 ; *Indian Antiquity*, XL, VIII, (1949), p. 77 and an article '*Dekkan of Satavahan Period*' in *Indian Antiquity*, XL, VII, (1918), p. 149 and *The Age of the Imperial Unity*.

(the so-called Andra or Andra-bhritya)[1]. The Satavahana rule lasted for nearly three hundred years. Together with these kingdoms a large number of indigenous states also flourished in northern India during the long period of approximately four centuries (100 B. C. to 300 A. D.). Among them the kingdoms of Ahichchhatra, Kausambi, Ayodhya, Malavas, Yaudheyas and Kalinga deserve mention. Some of them were republics. They were finally extinguished by the Gupta Emperors in the fourth century A. D. Thus, different, powerful dynasties had established their sway in different parts of the country. There was no strong centralised government. Therefore, this period may be called the *Sung-Satavahan-Saka Age.* It extends from the end of the first to the beginning of the second Magadha Empire or from the fall of the Mauryas to the advent of the Guptas—approximately from the second century B. C. to the fourth century A. D.

Characteristics of the Sunga-Satavahana-Saka Age.

1. *The Yavan incursions received set-back.* The renewed incursions of the Yavanas, which once threatened to submerge the whole of the northern India, received a check.

2. *Revival of the Vedic religion and use of Sanskrit Language.* There was an outburst of the activity in the realms of the religion, literature and art. Under the liberal patronage of Kanishka Buddhism spread far and wide especially Central Asia and China. Under the Brahman rulers of the Sunga and Kanva dynasties the Vedic religion was revived. *Bhagvata* and *Saiva* sects were growing in importance. It marked a reaction against the rising tide of the Buddhism. Though there was no Asoka to champion the cause of Bhagvata religion, yet the missionary propaganda of its votaries was very effective even in the realms of the Yavana princes. Many foreigners were converted to Bhagvata religion as is evinced by the Garuda pillar inscription at Bhilsa (Vidisa) in Madhya Bharat region and the cave inscription at Nasik. The famous Greek ruler Minader embraced Buddhism while Saka rulers Vedic religion.

[1] For more details of the Andhras see *Political History of Ancient India* by Dr. H. C. Ray-Chaudhary (5th Edition), Chapter VII, Section II.

3. *Foreigners were Indianised.* The alien rulers in India—the Greeks, the Sakas and the Kushanas—were Indianised. They adopted Indian customs and traditions and used Sanskrit and Prakrit languages in individual as well as administrative affairs.

4. *Beginning of Indian colonies abroad.* The missionary activities of the votaries of the Buddhism and revived Vedic religion outside India enabled the Indians to set up their colonies in central as well as south-east Asia. The life of the natives of these regions was deeply influenced by the Indian culture.

5. *Restoration of foreign contacts and brisk foreign trade.* The presence of aliens, especially the Greeks, restored India's contact with foreign countries. It gave a considerable stimulus to the inland as well as foreign trade of the country. Indian articles were demanded in large quantities by the citizens.

6. *Rise of the Gandhar School of art.* Besides the brisk foreign trade, Indian arts and sciences were influenced by the Hellenic culture. The rise of the Gandhar School of art testifies to the prevalance of the foreign influence on the art of the country.

7. *Growth of the republics.* Absence of the strong central power stimulated the growth of many a republic and provided opportunities to old republican states to revive their authority and assert their existence vigorously. Yaudhey, Malav and Kunind were such republics.

Political Conditions

In the Sung-Satavahan-Saka Age the administration did not change substantially from that of the Mauryan Age. The official machinery of the Mauryan period continued to function. But in the north-west India some changes were introduced in administration by the foreign conquerors. The system of hereditary officials with the Persian title of satrap was put into practice in the provincial administration. Greek titles like *meridarch, strategos* were used for certain officials. The provincial Governors were advised by a body of counsellors to enable them to conduct the administration smoothly. However, many of the provincial rulers were military governors. District officials appointed by the Satavahan kings were designated as

Mahasenapati. This indicates thas probably the provincial rule was of military character.

Hereditary monarchy was the prevailing form of government. People believed in the divine origin of a king. However, a ruler still regarded it as his duty to please his subjects and adopt measures for their welfare. There was a body of counsellors known as *Mantri parishad* to advise and assist the king in his work of administration. Generally a ruler abstained from imposing oppressive taxes.

Though there was military system of government and military rule in the provinces, self-governing institutions and republic form of government did not entirely disappear. There were many republics or *Janapads.* Each had its own code of laws, legislative assemblies and executive authorities. Each republic used to render homage and offer certain amount of *Bali* (tribute) to the Emperor of Magadha. Towns and villages had their own local self-government. Affairs of town were administered by town councils called *Nigama Sabha,* while those of village by village functionaries led by the village headman.

Social Conditions

Caste system continued to be the frame-work of the society. A large number of foreigners like Sakas, Yavanas, Pahlavas who had entered India were gradually incorporated into the society and they soon formed an integral part of it. As they were conquerors and warriors many of them were merged in the Kshatriya fold. The gradual absorption of these foreign elements in the society is one of the most striking features of the social development of the period. They were so completely merged in the society that no trace was left of their individual identity or spearate existence as a foreign tribe or community. This testifies to the catholic spirit of the Hindus of this age.

Second salient feature of the society of the period was the inter-marriage between different groups giving birth to new castes. Aryans in the Deccan and the eastern parts of the country established matrimonial alliances with the non-Aryans. The Satavahans themselves inter-married with Sakas. Even within the Aryan fold inter-caste marriages known as *Pratiloma*

and *Anuloma* were common. All this gave rise to the mixed castes known as *Varna-sankar*. *Vaideh*, *Avantya*, *Satvant* etc. were such new mixed castes. Then, there were persons who were degraded in society on account of not fulfilling their sacred duties. They were styled *Vratya* and formed castes of their own.

Third salient aspect of the society was the transformation of the people of many small sovereign republics into new castes. The rising power of Magadha wiped out from existence many small republics known as *Gana* and incorporated them in its widening sway, but they were allowed to follow their own professions, customs and traditions for which they were distinguished from others. This gave rise to new groups in society. The people of *Rohitak*, *Agraiya*, *Kamboj*, *Koliya* and *Arjunayan gana* were in due course called *Rastogis*, *Agrawals*, *Kambo*, *Kori* and *Aryan* respectively.

Persons could change profession to suit their needs. Brahmans figure in this age as generals, officials and rulers. Number of Sudras was swelling aud untouchability was prevailing in society. Though disabilities of women were steadily growing, yet women were known to have carried on administrative work. As Dr. Altekar reveals the Satavahan queen Nayanika acted as regent during the minority of her son. Rulers and nobles practised polygamy.

People indulged in festivities and merry gatherings. Dramas, dice play, dancing, singing and instrumental music were the common means of entertainment.

Literature. The rulers of this period were great patrons of Sanskrit and vernacular literature. The *Prakrit* literature flourished most at the court of the Satavahan kings, but the contemporary Saka rulers made Sanskrit as their official language. Sanskrit was used in their inscriptions. One of the Satavahan kings, Hala, was an accomplished poet and writer. He was the author of Prakrit anthology called the *Sattasai* (*Saptasataka*). Gunadya, the most celebrated poet of Prakrit, flourished in this age. It is said that he had written his original *Brihat katha* in Prakrit and Sarva-Varman also produced the *Katantra* in Prakrit for the benefit of an Andhra King. Pali language was also

enriched and the Buddhist scriptures in the Pali language were written in the first century B. C.

The Sunga and the Kanva rulers of Magadha, being Brahmans, liberally patronised Sanskrit language. Patanjali, who was a contemporary of Pushyamitra Sunga, had written his famous work the *Mahabhashya*. It is a commentary on Panini's grammar. Scholars hold the opinion that probably Manu-Smriti was compiled in this age. Bhasa, the famous poet and dramatist of Sanskrit flourished during the Kanva rule.[1] His plays numbering thirteen have their own rank in the Sanskrit literature. *Svapna Vasavdatta* is the best of his plays. The credit for having written the largest number of extant Sanskrit dramas goes to *Bhasa*. He used Prakrit in his dramas. Asvaghosa, the author of several poetical works, and Nagarjuna, the celebrated Buddhist philosopher, flourished during this period. Another literary figure was Arya Deva, the author of the *Chatuhsatika*. He criticised the Brahmanical practices. Bharat composed his celebrated *Natya sastra* probably in the second or third century A.D. It is the most important and earliest authoritative treatise on Sanskrit dramature and incidently the earliest work dealing with the topics of poetics. After Bharat there flourished Jayadeva, a well-known writer on Sanskrit metres and the author of *Jayadevachhandas*.

The literary activity of the period under review marks a great advance over that of the preceding one. 'The religious literature has grown in content and diversity and the vast canonical literature of the Buddhists throws into shade anything attempted before or since in this line. Philosophical literature has also been systematised and developed.' Though the dramas of Bhasa are eclipsed by the later masterpieces of Kalidas and Bhavabhuti but the *Mrichhakatika* of Sudraka, the author of half a dozen of Sanskrit works composed in this period, has ever remained famous and popular due to 'its variety of incidents and quick dramatic appeal.' The poems of Asvaghosha 'had strength

There is a controversy about the date of Bhasa. Pusalkar in his work *Bhasa–A study* places Bhasa in the 5th or 4th century B.C., whereas V.K.R. Dikshitar in Kane Commentaries tries to prove that Bhasa was a predecessor of Kautilya.

enough to influence the diction and incidents in the works of Kalidas.' The authors of this period do not possess the fondness of sound plays and double meaning as is evidenced in the works of later writers like Bana, Subandhu, Maga, etc. In medicine and astronomy, the knowledge of which was advanced a good deal due to the contact with the western people, important works were written. The most famous among them are *Charak Samhita* by Charak, *Sushrut* compiled by Nagarjuna and *Garg Samhita* by Gargacharya.

If Ashvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Parshwa and Vasumitra had enriched the Buddhist literature with their works, the Jains did not lag behind. Among the Jain writers of the age two figure prominently—Vajraswami and Aryarakshit who flourished in the first century A. D. It will be not an exaggeration if it is concluded that even in absence of strong central authority, incursions of foreigners, frequent revolts, and wars, there was general efflorescence of literary activity which reached at its climax in some branches of the literature during this long period of nearly five hundred years under review.

Economic Conditions

In the Sunga-Satavahan-Saka age trade and commerce was in flourishing condition. Trade-guilds or *Srenis* were normal feature of the period. There are references to guilds of weavers, druggists, corn dealers, potters, oil manufacturers, bamboo-workers, etc. Their organisation was complete and effective. These guilds were self-governing corporations. They brought members of the same profession or craft together, regulated their business on mutual goodwill and served as banks giving loans and receiving deposits on interest. The rate of interest varied from 2 to 12 per cent per annum. To facilitate exchange both silver and copper coins, known as *Karshapanas* were used. In northern India gold currency was in vogue during the Kushan reign. There are references to the gold coins of the Kushans. Their exchange rate was 1 : 35 to the indigenous silver Karshapanas.[1]

Foreign commerce and trade flourished well in the period. People of both northern and southern India participated

[1] *Indian Antiquary* (1919), p. 81.

vigorously in commercial relations of India with the west as is evidenced by the *Periplus of the Erythralan Sea* which gives an account of the Egyptian trade and commerce with East-Africa and India. Ships of the western countries, loaded with merchandise, visited Indian ports of Broach, Lymrika (Malabar), Surppara (Sopara) and Keliena (Kalyan). There was a considerable progress o maritime activities and inland and sea-borne trade during the reign of Yajnasri Satkarni as is evident from the coins having a two masted ship with a fish and a counch and the legend of *Sri Yajna Satkanisa*. (*Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, Vol. III, Pt. I, 1941, pp. 43-45). The sea-ports of the eastern coast under the Satavahans also had a flourishing trade in spices with the Malaya peninsula in south-east Asia. Nasik, Tagara, Junnar and Paithan were the important centres of commerce in the Deccan. In the northern India Patliputra, Ujjain, Mathura and Taxila were places of great commercial importance. They were in flourishing condition. All these towns must have been linked together with roads and frequent communications between provinces were probably not difficult.

Vast fortunes were acquired by persons engaged in trade and commerce. Large sums of money and liberal donations spent on charitable endowments, religious places and sacrifices by princes, monarchs and individuals testify to the general material prosperity and wealth of the people.

The great *Chaitya* cave at Karle was constructed by a Seth of Vaijayanti and most valuable gifts were offered at Kanheri and other places. They bear testimony to the charities of the wealthy people.

Religious Conditions

1. *Revival of Brahmanism.* The Sunga and Kanva monarchs were ardent followers of Brahmanism. Under their liberal patronage Brahmanism received a great impetus. Important orthodox Vedic rites and the Asvamedha, Rajasuya, Aptoryama and other sacrifices were revived by the Sungas and Satavahans. Sacrifices were offered by private persons also. Pushyamitra Sunga and Satkarni performed horse-sacrifice on grand scale and Brahmans whose services were requisitioned

for the purpose got decent *Dakshina* or fees. The Satavahanas being Brahman rulers favoured Brahmanism liberally. The Sunga, Kanva and Satavahan government restored old Brahmanic faith with its ceremonious rituals and the supremacy of the Brahmans and thus gave a great set-back to the Buddhism. It was the outcome of a religious reaction against the pacific Buddhism. But the new Brahmanism revived during this age was not the old Vedic religion, but a new form of catholic Hinduism embracing good elements of various creeds. This new revived faith later on came to be styled as the Pauranic Hinduism.

2. *Vaishnavism, Saivism and Naga cult.* The new revived Brahmanism had two principal sects—Vaishnavism and Saivism —Vaishnavism known as Bhagvatism flourished well in the north as well as in Deccan. The epigraphic reference to such names as Vasudev, Samkarshana, Indra and the four guardians of the quarters (Lokapalas)—Yama, Varuna, Kubera and Vasava prove the existence of Vaishnavism in the Deccan. Similarly Saivism was also prevailing in many parts of the country. According to Prof. Bhandarkar Saivism was far more prevalent in the Deccan during this period. Lord Shiva was worshipped there under four names—Shiva, Mahadeva, Bhava and Bhutapal. God Skanda was also worshipped both separately and conjointly with Shiva. References to Naga, Sarpa and *Sarpila* indicate the prevalence of Naga cult or serpent worship.

3. *Buddhism.* Though Sungas, Kanvas and Satavahanas were ardent patrons of Brahmanism, they tolerated Buddhism and Jainism. Both Brahmanism and Buddhism prospered under their tolerant rule. The votaries of Brahmanism offered stipend for the education of the Buddhist monks. Pious donors excavated *Chaityagrihas* (or Buddhist cave temples) or caused caves to be excavated for the residence and use of the Buddhist *Bhiksus* or monks. They adequately provided for their maintenance by offering and attaching landed property to the cave monasteries or depositing money on interest with trading guilds (Srenis). They served the purpose of permanent endowments known as *Akshaya nivi.*

Though Buddhism received set-back to some extent in

Magadha and Deccan on account of the revival of Brahmanism and priesthood, it was in exceedingly flourishing condition in the north-west. Under the Kushans its new form Mahayan Buddhism spread far and wide. The Buddhist monks were still carrying enthusiastically the divine message—*Ashtangamarga* of Lord Buddha beyond the Hindu-Kush and the Pamir. There they were acting as torch bearers of Hindu culture and religion.

4. *Religious harmony and toleration.* Inspite of the prevalence of a large number of sects and creeds, the votaries of different faiths were living in perfect harmony. Sometimes they even offered grants and endowment to one another. The Satavahana kings' religious charities were not confined to their own faith Brahmanism but were liberally extended to Buddhism also.

5. *Catholicity of Hinduism.* Brahmanism later called Hinduism was then not narrow and parochial in its outlook. A large number of foreigners embraced either Buddhism, or Brahmanism, adopted Hindu names and found a place within the fold of Hinduism. They made gifts in connection with Chaityas or monastic residences as shown in many cave inscriptions in the Deccan. Heliodorus who was sent as ambassador to Bhagabhadra of Vidisa (modern Bhelsa in Madhya Bharat) from Antialkidas of Taxila embraced Bhagvatism and erected a Garud pillar at Vidisa as a manifestation of his religious enthusiasm. Rudradaman, a Saka ruler, was a staunch follower of Brahmanism.

Art

Characteristics of the art of the Sunga-Satavahan-Saka Age. The period beginning from the fall of the Mauryas and ending at the advent of the Guptas covers approximately five centuries. It constitutes a distinct age in the evolution of Indian art. The national art of India underwent a rapid development in this period. It has the following characteristics :—

1. Foreign and especially Greek ideas flowing eastward in an ever increasing volume influenced the course of Indian art in the north-west. It gave rise to entirely new school of art known as the Gandhar art.

2. Stone usurped the place of wood for architectural purposes.

3. The artists took considerable pain in carving and evolved perfect techniques of sculpture. It was probably due to the natural growth of an aesthetic process.

4. From the point of view of subject-matter the art of the period is predominently Buddhist. If reflects 'more of the mind, tradition and culture—ideology of the larger section of the people than Mauryan art was capable of doing'. The art of the period "formally and spiritually is opposed to all that Mauryan art stands for, and is different in motive and direction, technique and significance".[1] The Mauryan art was mostly the art of the court whereas the art of the Sunga-Satavahan-Saka period is of urban people. It reflects an intense feeling for nature and a vivid comprehension of the unity of all life, human, animal and vegetable.

5. After the fall of the Mauryas India, more particularly the Deccan and the far south, participated in rich maritime trade both with the east as well as west. As a result of this the country steadily developed big emporiums of trade and commerce and civilisation was transformed into a mercantile one creating urban aristocratic and bourgeois society. This inevitably brought a change in the social taste and the attitude towards life, and the art of the period profusely reflects its life. Thus, for the first time Indian art becomes conscious of the socio-economic structure of the society and in view of the social psychology 'learns to differentiate between the subtle and the violent shades and emotions of the human heart.' The bas-reliefs of Bharhut, Sanchi, Amravati and other places serve the purpose of an illuminating commentary on the life of the age. They reflect the spontaneous joy, emotions and movements of the life of the masses. The art at Sanchi and Amravati testifies 'the disposition and attitude of a mercantile social economy which manifests preference for transient pleasures and temporary

[1] *The History and Culture of the Indian People (The Age of the Imperial Unity)*, Vol. II, p. 510.

values, exuberant expression of joy and passion, and courtly elegance and sophistication.'[1]

Description of the monuments of the period

The country must have been dotted with a large number of monuments of the period, but only a few have survived the ravages of time and these are significant enough to give us an idea of the progress of art of the age. They are at Bharhut, Sanchi, Bodh-Gaya, Mathura, Gandhara, Amravati, Nagarjunikonda (near the mouth of the Krishna river on the eastern coast), Karli, Nasik and some sites on the western coast.

Stupas. During the Sunga period a big Stupa was constructed at Bharhut in old Nagod State now in Vindhya Pradesh is region of Madhya Pradesh. It consists of a hemispherical dome of brick surmounted with a shaft and umbrella which represents spiritual sovereignty of Buddhism. It is surrounded by a railing made of red stand-stone. The sculpture reliefs on the gateways, pillars, upright and cross-bars on the railings give us beautiful pictorial representations of nature, the incidents from the Buddha's life, Jatak stories and several humorous scenes. These sculptures give us 'wonderful panorama of scenes of daily life and concrete illustrations of faith, hope and ideas.' The style of the carving reveals crude workmanship because the human figures engraved there have defects of the physiognomy and bodily postures. However, when all the sculptures are taken together they indicate wonderful simplicity and vigour. They bear testimony to an intelligent appreciation of facts and views of life.

At Sanchi three big stupas were constructed in this period. The big stupa which was constructed by Emperor Asoka was enlarged to nearly twice its size during the Sunga period. It was enveloped in stone. Its wooden railing was replaced by stone railing and four gateways or *Toranas* were added. They resemble one another in design and dimensions. All the four gateways are richly engraved with sculptures, in contrast to the railings which are quite plain. These sculptures represent many episodes of the Buddha's life and events of the Jatak stories.

Ibid, p. 528.

The defects of the Bharhut sculpture are no longer seen here. 'The individual figures, the method of their grouping, mode of expression and decorative elements—all show a far higher standard of technical skill and artistic conception.'[1] It seems that the Sanchi artists were 'inspired by a far higher sense of beauty, rhythm and symmetry.'

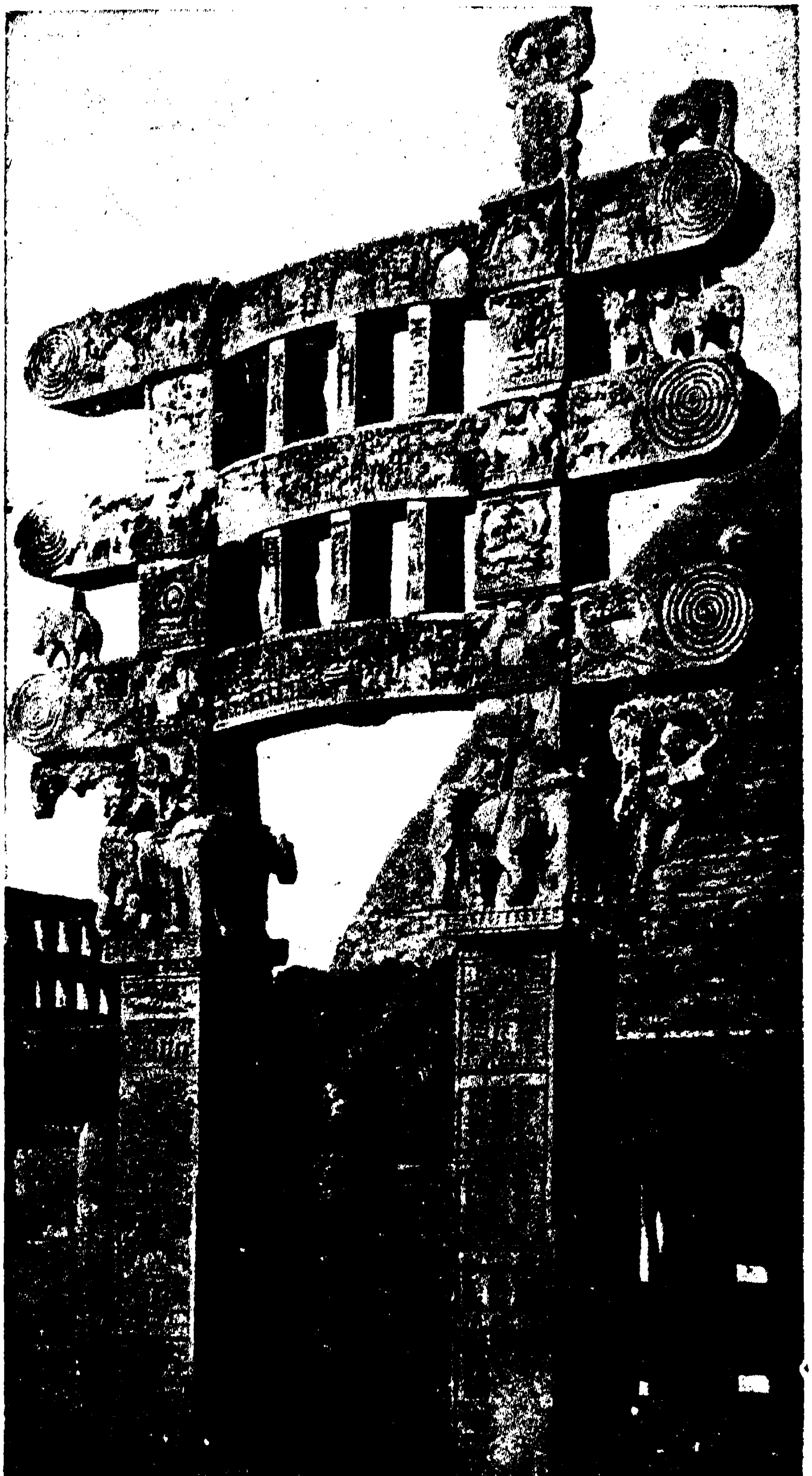
There was probably a stupa at Bodh-Gaya. A small stone railing was placed there. Later on a temple was constructed in place of the stupa. Like Bharhut this railing was also engraved with individual figures.

A large number of Stupas were constructed in the Punjab and the region round Peshawar—ancient Gandhar. Remains of many of them have been discovered especially at Chakpat in the Swat valley and at Manikyala in the Punjab. These stupas had their own designs and characteristic mode of ornamentation and so are called Gandharian stupas.

Stupas were also constructed in southern India and the Satavahan region was studded with them. The most important of them were at Amravati, Bhattiprolu, Jaggayyapeta, Gantasala and Nágarjunikonda. None of them has survived in its entirety. However, the remains of these—specially those of Amravati—reveal to us the following characteristics of the southern stupas. First, a stupa had a lofty circular terrace with stairways. At the top were five free-standing pillars called worshipful columns (*Ayaka Khambas* or *Aryaka Khambas*) ; second, not only the railings of the ground staircase with surrounded the monument but even the drum and the hemispherical dome were richly engraved. Third, instead of red sand-stone marble was used especially at Amravati. Fourth, as there are striking differences between the stupas of southern India and those of north, the stupas of the south are classed as belonging to a new school known as Vengi or Amravati school. Vengi is the old name of the Krishna-Godavari delta.

The figures at Amravati stupas are slightly rounder, tall, slim and in fuller and more delicate modelling. They are represented in most difficult poses and curves. The figure of

An Advanced History of India by Dr. R. C. Mujumdar and others, p. 239.



Gateway—Sanchi Stupa.

the Buddha is seen here and there, but he is frequently represented by a symbol of lotus or foot-prints. 'On the whole, men, animals and vegetation are more elastic and treated more elegantly than in the north. 'The Vengi art has neither the simple and spontaneous naturalism of Sanchi nor the unabashed lewdness of Mathura.' The Vengi art's sensuousness is more refined, elegant and sophisticated, compared to that of Sanchi or Bharhut. Undoubtedly the artists of Vengi had conceived the delicate and voluptuous beauty of the human body and had attained a complete mastery of an advanced technique for the full realisation of their conception. The art reached its highest level at Amravati in the middle of second century A. D.

Pillars and Towers. Probably many pillars and towers must have been erected, but with the exception of one at Bhilsa none has survived so far. The most famous of the tower that gained fame throughout Asia was that of Kanishka. It was a pagoda constructed at Purushpur (Peshawar) over the relics of the Buddha. Fahien who had seen this relic-tower remarks that it consisted of 'a base in five stages (150 feet), a superstructure of carved wood in thirteen storeys (400 feet) surmounted by an iron column with from thirteen to twenty five gilt copper umbrellas (88 feet), making a total height of 638 feet'[1]. This monument was incomparable in beauty, the largest of its kind in India and one of the wonders of Asia in ancient time. But this tower had completely perished.

Besides this tower, a pillar was erected by Heliodorus at Vidisa to immortalise his new faith Bhagvatism. Though in rock-cut caves many monolithic pillars were constructed but they lack the excellent polish and remarkable proportions of Asokan pillars. The decline in this branch of art is clearly visible.

Rock-cut Vihars and Chaitya Halls. The monastic needs produced rock-cut architecture of great importance in India. A large number of temples, halls and places of residence for monks were hewn out of solid rocks. The caves which served the purpose of residences of the Buddhist monks were plain buildings

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[1] *History of India and Indonesian Art* by Dr. A. K. Coomarswami, p. 53.

having a big central hall, small cells around it and a pillared verandah in front of it. The caves which were used for prayer, worship and meditation were extensive halls known as Chaityas. A Chaitya consisted of a long rectangular hall, rounded at the rear end. Two long rows of pillars internally divided the hall into a nave (big central part), two side aisles (narrow parts at the two sides) and an apse. A solid stupa stood in apse as the votive object. The doorway was in front of the stupa. A huge arched window, shaped like a horse-shoe, was constructed above the main door for the free play of fresh light and air inside the hall.

Under the rule of Satavahans many monastic residences or *vihar* caves and chaitya halls for meditation and worship were cut out of living rocks at Bhaja, Bedsa, Nasik, Kondana, Karli, Ajanta, Pitalkhora, Junnar and other places on the western coasts. A wonderful progress was made in this rock-cut architecture during the period under review.

The largest of all the chaitya caves and one of the finest monuments of India is the Chaitya Hall at Karli, constructed in the first quarter of the second century A. D. It is the most perfect of its type and famous for its beauty and grandeur of sculpture and wonderful rows of splendid pillars. Moreover, it was at Karli that the beginning of the storeyed *Vihar* of the rock-cut order was made and later on it developed into magnificent three storeyed cave dwellings at Ajanta and other places.

In eastern India Jain caves at Udayagiri and Kandagiri near Bhuvaneshwara in Orissa were excavated during the period ranging from 103 B.C. to 150 A.D. Some of these caves have two storeys. The *Rani-ka-nur* or the *Rani-gumpha* in Udayagiri is the largest and best of all these caves. Sculpture in these caves reveal to us crude and coarse workmanship and provincial outlook compared to those of Sanchi and caves of Western India. Though maturity of conception, theme and representation together with vitality and vigorous movements are noticeable in the reliefs of some of the caves, yet technically the art is less advanced.

Cult-Images. Sometimes people expressed their religious beliefs, ideas and feelings through the medium of stone statues. Consequently divinities in Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain

myths, legends and religion have appeared in the form of stone images. The earliest stone images have been discovered at Mathura, Patna, Besnagar (Bhilsa) and Pawaya in Madhva Bharat. They were mostly of *Yaksha* and *Yakshinis*. Later on the art of image making developed at two places Gandhar and Mathura. Stone images of Buddha, Bodhisattvas and other divinities were made there.

The sculpture art of Mathura had two periods. The earlier one produced coarse and rude figures whereas the later one represented the Buddha in human figure. This is a significant development in the evolution of Indian art of sculpture. The Buddha was never represented at Sanchi, Bharhut and Bodh-Gaya in the human form but by a symbol of either two foot-prints or a lotus or a wheel. This representation of the Buddha as human figure at Mathura inspired generations of artists for centuries together to give concrete and precise expression of the Indian idea about divinities through the stone statues. Consequently a large number of the stone images of the new religious cults were created later on and this art blossomed luxuriantly in the Gupta period.

The figures at Mathura were carved out boldly against the plain surface. Certain heaviness of form, open eyed smiling countenance, 'broad musculine chest and shoulders and a firm body-form expressive of enormus pent up energy' are the general characteristics of Mathura statues of Buddha and Bodhisattvas. While the Buddha image was gradually evolving at Mathura, the same art was being cultivated in Gandhar under the Greek influence. It is known as the Gandhar art. Though it flourished well under the Kushans, it had taken shape long before the Kushans came upon the scene. As a result of this a large number of statues of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas were made in the north-west, the Punjab and Mathura. But the two types of the Buddha images belonged to two different social and psychological spheres. They differed widely. The Gandhar Buddha statues were sophisticated in appearance and expression and had not the spiritual dignity. In fact, 'the Gandhar type is eclectic and syncretistic.' If the Gandhar Buddha is lifeless human being of ordinary stature, the Mathura Buddha is essentially Indian.

Besides the cult images, heavy life-size portrait statues of the Saka-Kushan kings were also made at Mathura in the first century A. D. A large number of male and female figures (*Yaksha*, *Yakshini*, *Vrikshakas* and *Apsaras*) were chiselled out at various sites in Mathura. Thus continuity of the indigenous tradition was maintained even in the third century.

Life and Culture during the period of the Kushans

General Prosperity. The Kushan Empire (25 A. D.—227 A.D.) in India meant merely the annexation of certain provinces and not the complete conquest of one people by another. The Kushan Empire already established in Afghanistan merely extended its boundaries further inside India with the breakdown of the imperial authority of Patliputra. Vasudeva's (a Kushan King) conversion to orthodox Hinduism eliminated whatever foreign character the Kushan monarchy had originally. There is no wonder, therefore, that Indian life and culture, except one branch of art, did not undergo substantial changes during the Kushan age. However, the Empire of the Kushans proved a great civilizing factor. It opened the way for Indian civilization to Central and Eastern Asia. Trade and commerce flowed between China, India, Persia, Mesopotamia and the Roman Empire. The Kushan Ambassadors were despatched to the great Roman Emperors. The sea-borne trade of India was carried, under the Kushans, through the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea. Indian goods were carried through these two channels to Egypt and the Roman Empire. Indian silk pieces, pearls and other articles of Eastern luxury were in great demand by the Roman nobility. In payment of these articles, quantities of Roman gold coins poured into India so much so that a Roman writer, Pliny, in a patriotic vein lamented the flow of gold from his country to India. The Kushan age witnessed the development of Mahayan form of Buddhism and the introduction of Buddhism into China by Kasyapa Matanga (61-67 A. D.). It was the period of religious ferment and missionary activities. It saw the important developments in literature and sculpture, especially Gandhar art.

Literature. The Kushans were patrons of literature and art. Large quantities of Sanskrit literature of high standard, both

religious and secular, were produced in the congenial atmosphere of royal patronage. The name of the Kushan Emperor Kanishka is associated with several eminent Buddhist writers, Asvaghosha, Nagarjuna, Vasumitra and Charak. Asvaghosha was a versatile genius, well-versed in music, literature, religion, philosophy and debate. *Buddha Charita*, *Saudaranada Kavya*, *Sariputra Prakarana* and *Vajrasuchi* are important among his works. Nagarjuna was a great teacher and philosopher. He was famous as one of the most important exponents of Mahayan philosophy. His best work is *Prajana Paramita Sutra Sastra*. Vasumitra, a leading Buddhist theologist, was the writer of *Mahavibhasa Sastra* which gives us volumes of information on Buddhist philosophy. Charak, the reputed court physician of Kanishka, was the celebrated author of the Ayurvedic Science.

Religion.[1] An important event of the Kushan Empire is that it not only witnessed the extension of Buddhism but also the most serious dissension within the bossom of the Buddhist church itself. Discussions and divisions among the monks, regarding the observance of certain practices, rules of conduct and rituals had been going on for many a generation, but a remarkable change in the fundamental doctrines of the religion manifested during the Kushan age. It was this change in the Buddhist creed which permanently divided Buddhist Church into two big camps—Hinayan and Mahayan, the former was the original Buddhism and the latter was the new school of Buddhism. Mahayanism was recognised as a State religion by the Kushans.

According to Hinayan, a man himself had to strive for his salvation and must make himself holy. He should neither pray to God or gods, nor depend upon Him for deliverance from sin, nor offer prayers to Lord Buddha. But the new creed Mahayan elevated Buddha from his position of a teacher to that of God or the king of gods. Buddhism thus under the Kushans became theistict. The images of the Buddha were made and placed in churches and prayers for salvation and forgiveness of sins were offered to him by the people. In addition to Lord Buddha wor-

Longman's History of India, pp. 138-140 : *Early History of India* by Ghosh, pp. 238-241 ; *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I, pp. 275-289.

ship and prayers were also offered to Bodhisattvas, the holy saints who were in the process of obtaining Buddha-hood. These Bodhisattvas were to act as intercessors between the great Buddha and the sinning men. The images of the Bodhisattva with those of the Buddha were also made and worshipped. On the other hand, the Hinayan School instead of making images of Buddha, represented him only by symbols, *e. g.*, an empty seat or a pair of foot-prints. Another marked difference between Hinayan and Mahayan is that the doctrine of Bodhisattvas led to a new belief that everyone might aim at or even rise to the Buddha-hood for assisting men in obtaining salvation. On the contrary Hinayan, the original creed of the Buddha, mentions that each had to strive for his or her salvation without the assistance of a god or saint.

Mahayanism believed in the divinity of the Buddha, in the efficiency of prayer, faith and devotion to a personal saviour. It began to follow the Hindu idea of Yoga, the practice of which was supposed to lead to spiritual insight. It made an irresistible appeal to the emotions by its gorgeous ritual and its programme of active humanitarianism as distinct from lonely contemplation and self-mortification. On the other hand, Hinayanism was unprogressive, cold, intellectual, inert and rather monotonous. In short, Mahayanism was an intensly living and active faith and infused a new life in the old Buddhism. In the Kushan Age Buddhism, under its new form, spread rapidly to many countries beyond the borders of India—Tibet, China, Burma and Japan. Mahayanism is called the northern school of Buddhism and Sanskrit is the vehicle of its literature to distinguish it from the old or Hinayan Buddhism which is called the southern school, with Pali as the medium of its sacred texts. The following factors contributed to this transformation of Buddhism.

1. The new school of Buddhism, Mahayanism, had its origin and development in the Punjab and the north-west of India which was completely over-run and occupied by hordes of foreign invaders—Greeks, Parthians and Scythians—for hundreds of years since 250 B. C. They had brought with them many new customs, traditions and beliefs. They had continued to practise some of them even after they abandoned their own

religion and adopted new creed—Buddhism. The most important of these was the practice of making images of the deities whom they used to worship. When they adopted Buddhism, they began to make images of the Buddha and worship them—especially the Greeks.

2. The exposition and preaching of the Hindu doctrine of Bhakti or devotion had its reaction on Buddhism. The Bhakti cult, which was becoming popular at this time, enjoined upon its followers a deep single-minded devotion and intense attachment to the object of their worship and inspired the devotees with the feelings of warmth and emotion. All this was absent in the orthodox Buddhism. As the Bhakti cult supplied the idea of a god-head or an object of worship, and emphasised purity, truthfulness and charity, the lay followers of Buddha accepted Bhakti and began to make his images and use them as visible objects of worship. Moreover, many Hindus adopted Lord Buddha as one of their gods and began to worship him. The polytheist Hindus could afford it. It helped to bring about a compromise between Hinduism and Buddhism.

3. Since the days of Asoka, the practice of building monasteries and erecting stupas over the relics of the Buddha had become common. These relic monuments served as constant reminders to the resident monks of the glory of their Lord. Now, as the practice of making images of gods had been introduced, the Buddhist monks, too, were naturally prone to adopt the same. Because an image was a more visible symbol and a better reminder of the master than any of his buried relics. It was an irony of history. The Buddha had revolted against god's worship and he himself became a god to be worshipped.

4. The monasteries had acquired a great amount of wealth which provided plenty of leisure to the monks. They, therefore, evolved an elaborate complicated ritual under which the Buddha's faith and the code of practical ethics were completely buried.

5. The moment Indian Buddhism began its foreign travels, it was bound to change. It was natural as it had to adapt itself foreign tastes and necessities. Thus it adopted many new

practices and beliefs which were against the spirit of original Buddhism.

6. With the collapse of the authority and power of the Imperial Mauryas Patliputra itself had lost its political prestige and religious status. Consequently the central Buddhist monastery suffered considerably in dignity. Its commands were no longer observed sincerely or taken with awe or carried out with reverence by subordinate monasteries and monks in other parts of the country. The Gandhara monasteries, therefore, allowed those redical changes to creep in with impunity. In fact, the centre of Buddhism now shifted from Patliputra to Gandhara.

The Kushan emperors appear to have been highly adaptable. When the Kushans had settled down in India they conformed to their new environments. They gave up their old names and adopted Hindu names as Vasudeva ; abandoned their pagan beliefs and adopted Buddhism or Hinduism ; even on their coins they had the figures of Hindu gods.

Art; the Gandhara School of Sculpture. Intimately connected with the Mahayan School of Buddhism was a new school of Indian sculpture, known as the Gandhara School. It flourished under the Kushans especially Kanishka during whose time a vast number of the Buddhist monasteries, stupas and statues were constructed. They bear a distinct influence of the old Greek School of Art. The province of Gandhara, the centre of the new school of Buddhism, was so situated as to be the meeting ground of the Indian, Chinese, Iranian and the Greeco-Roman cultures. It was, therefore, quite natural for the province to absorb foreign ideas and influences. Hence the art of the province could not but be a mixture of the West and the East. It owed its origin to the Greek rulers of Bactria and North-West India. The Gandhara art is undoubtedly 'derived from Greek art or to be more precise the Hellenistic art of Asia Minor and the Roman Empire.' Accordingly it is also known as Indo-Greek or Greeco-Roman art. As this art was adopted to Indian genius and applied to Buddhist subjects, it is also called the Greeco-Buddhist School of Art. 'But though the technique was borrowed from Greece, the art was essentially Indian in spirit, and it was solely employed to give expression

to the beliefs and practices of the Buddhists. With a few exceptions, no Greek story or legend, and no Greek art *motif* has been detected among the numerous specimens of Gandhara sculpture.'[1] The Indian subjects were interpreted through the Greeco-Roman technique. In fact the Gandhara artist had the hand of a Greek and the heart of an Indian." The sentiment is Buddhist but the technique is grafted on a foreign soil. Outside India Gandhara art became very important as it turned to be the parent of the Buddhist art of Eastern or Chinese Turkestan, Mongolia, China, Korea and Japan.

The Gandhara sculptures have been found in the ruins of Taxila and in various ancient sites in Afghanistan and the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. They consist mostly of images of Buddha and relief sculptures representing scenes from Buddhist texts. They were executed in stone, stucco, terracotta and clay and appear to have been invariably embellished with gold leaf or paint. Specimens preserved in Peshawar, Lahore and other museums are executed in stone. But at Taxila the archaeologists have discovered, in addition to stone images, a large number of stucco ones, a smaller number of terracotta and clay-figures. The discoveries have greatly added to our knowledge of sculpture and the technical skill employed by the artists of the Gandhara School.[2]

There are some outstanding technical characteristics of the Gandhara School of sculpture that easily distinguish it from other Indian sculptures. In the first place, Gandhara School has 'a tendency to mould the human body in a realistic manner with great attention to accuracy of physical details, especially by the delineation of muscles and the addition of moustaches etc. Secondly, the representation of the thick drapery with large and bold fold-lines form a distinct characteristic. Lastly, the Gandhara sculptures reveal in rich carving, elaborate ornamentation and complex symbolism.

For a long time it was believed that the images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas executed by the Gandhara art served as the

[1] *An Advanced History of India* by R.C. Majumdar and others, p. 235.

[2] *A Guide to Taxila* by Marshall, p. 31.

model for those executed at Mathura and other centres and thus the Gandhara School of Sculpture influenced the other schools of the Indian art. But now it is recognised as Dr. R.C. Majumdar points out that the Buddha-image was evolved independently at Mathura and Gandhara. There appears a striking difference between the Buddha-images of Gandhara and those of the Indian interior. 'The former laid stress on accuracy of anatomical details and physical beauty, while the latter strove towards imparting a sublime and spiritual expression to the figure. The one was realistic and the other idealistic'—the vital difference between Western and Indian art.

The main theme of the Gandhara School of Sculpture was the new form of Buddhism and its most important contribution was the evolution of an image of Buddha. The Gandhara school of art was a tremendous iconographic success, because from now onward the figures of the Buddha were much in vogue. Fine images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas and relief-sculptures illustrating various episodes of Buddha's present and past lives are remarkably executed in a kind of black stone. The life of Buddha forms the inspiring motive of this art. In fact, the Gandhara School of Sculpture is a lively commentary on the life and deeds of Lord Buddha. However, it should be noted, as Sir John Marshall points out, that the Gandhara School of Art never took real hold upon India, because the Indians and the Greeks were radically different and dissimilar.

Besides this School of Sculpture, there were other schools of art particularly flourishing in Mathura and Amravati in the south. Simplicity and restraint were the marked features of these schools.

Conclusion. The period beginning from Chandragupta Maurya (322 B.C.) to the last Kushan king Vasudeva (227 A.D.) witnessed great evolution of Indian cultural life. For the first time political and cultural unity was established in the country. The system of imperial government was perfected, and the art of sculpture reached the high water-mark of artistic achivements and Gautam Buddha's religion was raised from the status of a local sect to that of a world religion. Centuries of peaceful and settled rule fostered the growth of urban culture. Trade and

commerce, science, literature and art all flourished well. Contact with the foreign rulers especially with the Greek kings of the west and diplomatic relations with the Roman Emperors were established in this age. It influenced the Indian culture and life notably in the sphere of art. Consequently a new school of sculpture—the Gandhara School of Sculpture—was gradually evolved. Another current of the foreign influence flowed in the religion and transformed the orthodox Buddhist religion into new active faith, Mahayanism. But the closing years of this age also witnessed another internal religious current—the revival of Brahmanism.

Chapter 8

The Gupta Empire and the Hindu Cultural Revival

The Nagas and the Vakatakas. When the Kushan empire in the north-west and Andhra empire in the south-east broke up, two dynasties—the Nagas approximately 200-350 A. D. and the Vakatakas 250-435 A. D. rose to great prominence. The Naga princes (Nava Naga and Virasena Naga) after a struggle of over fifty years succeeded in sweeping away the alien rule of the Kushans and Saka Satraps from the Gangetic basin and Mathura. They were the worshippers of Hindu gods and were patrons of Sanskrit scholars and Vedic religion.

The Vakatakas developed their power and extended their sway in the Bundelkhand region under Pravarsena I. Under his grandson Rudrasena I, the kingdom of the Nagas was united to the kingdom of the Vakatakas about 344-48 A.D. His son Prithvisena I, a contemporary of Samudragupta, came in conflict with him but was able to hold his own against the Imperial Guptas. Though eclipsed by the Guptas for the time being, the Vakatakas outlived the Guptas and regained their position and prestige after the demise of Skandagupta in 468 A. D. The Vakatakas established a strong military power in the centre of India before the Guptas had appeared on the stage of political history. Their contribution to Indian cultural life is noteworthy. They worshipped Hindu gods and goddesses, revived old vedic rites, religious practices and cultural traditions and bestowed munificent largesses upon Sanskrit scholars and artists. The art of sculpture and painting, developed under the Vakatakas,

had attained the level of excellence; some of the Ajanta caves are its best specimens.

The Imperial Guptas (300-500 A. D. approximately). With the advent of the fourth century the centre of political interest is once again shifted to Patliputra in Magadha, where a new dynasty of the Guptas sprang up. It was founded by Chandragupta I, the son of Ghatotkachha Gupta, an insignificant Raja. The marriage of Chandragupta with a Lichhavi princess Kumar Devi considerably helped him in laying the foundation of the greatness of the Guptas. This gave him the possession of Patliputra and thus enabled him to extend his sway over the Gangetic valley as far as Prayag.

Samudragupta. Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Samudragupta. After conquering the whole of northern India and annexing it to his empire, he embarked upon the conquest of the south. Instead of annexing the south to his empire he was content with receiving homage and tribute. Several frontier kingdoms accepted his suzerainty. He performed the horse-sacrifice to commemorate his victories. His relation with foreign princes were friendly and he permitted the Ceylonese king, Meghavarman, to build a monastery at Gaya. Samudragupta was a versatile genius—a musician, poet, scholar, general and warrior. He was a great military genius and his reign a vast military campaign.

Chandragupta II (375-413 A.D.). Samudragupta was succeeded by Ramgupta and then Chandragupta II. He was a warrior king and he conquered Malwa, Gujrat and Kathiawar and thus wiped out all traces of Saka rule from India and assumed the title of Vikramaditya. Fa-Hien, a Chinese pilgrim, visited India during his reign to obtain the Buddhist scriptures. His observations throw a flood of light on the social, religious and political conditions of India under the Guptas. Chandragupta was a great patron of art and letters and his reign marks a high water-mark of the Gupta glory.

Kumargupta I (413-455 A.D.). Chandragupta was succeeded by his son Kumargupta. He was able to retain intact the vast empire that he had inherited from his father. His celebration of the Ashvamedha sacrifice indicates that he must have

won laurels on the field and must have been acknowledged as the paramount ruler of India. Towards the close of his reign the Gupta empire was threatened from the Hun invasion.

Skandagupta (455-467 A. D.). Kumargupta was succeeded by his brave son Skandagupta. When the Huns again appeared, he organised the defence of the empire and successfully repelled the Huns, but he died fighting against these Huns.

Successors of Skandagupta. The continuous foreign invasions and wars weakened the Gupta Dynasty and after the death of Skandagupta the empire seems to have suffered from wars of succession. The weak successors of Skandagupta were unable to repel the invasions of the Huns who about the middle of the sixth century had forced an entry into northern India and their king Toramana was reigning in Malwa. The magnificent fabric of the Gupta Empire crumbled down to pieces. Only petty dynasties, that rose on the ruins of the Gupta empire, remained to recall the golden age of the Guptas.

The Hindu cultural revival and the Importance of the Gupta Age. Before the advent of the Guptas, the most prominent feature of the history of the period beginning from the decline of the Kushans, was the rise, grouth and development of the sentiment of nationality which revealed itself in almost every aspect of the life of the nation. It was brought about partly as a reaction against a prolonged political domination by the aliens like Greeks, Parthians, Kushans and Saka Satraps, and partly against the Buddhist domination in the realm of religion. This national movement was set on foot by the Nagas, was continued by the Vakatakas and was carried to its logical conclusions by the imperial Guptas. The movement was marked by a spirit of revolt against foreign things and by a keen desire for restoring Indian things. It was a nation-wide attempt to revive the Indo-Aryan culture. The foreign rule in the country was, by degrees, replaced by indigenous Indian rule in northern, central and western India; the influence of the foreign art which was culminating in the Gandhara art was completely shaken off; Buddhism was brought down from its high pedestal. It was gradually assimilated and absorbed into the parental Brahmanism, the use of Pali and Prakrit languages was discarded in

favour of Sanskrit, the tradition of imperial unity was gradually fostered and the ideal of enlightened government was practised.

The Naga rulers first appeared as the champions of the national cause early in the third century. They organised a struggle against the foreigners and swept away the alien Kushan rule from the Gangetic basin and Mathura and re-established the Hindu rule and the imperial traditions. They played an important part in the cultural history of the country by reviving the old vedic rites and the study of Sanskrit language and literature. The introduction of the Devanagri script, in which Sanskrit and Hindi languages are written today, was the outcome of the Naga patronage.

The cultural revivalist movement was passed on to the new ruling dynasty of the Vakatakas. The aim of the Vakatakas, like that of the Nagas, was the establishment of Hindu sovereignty and reviving Hindu religion, Hindu culture and Sanskrit language—all of which had suffered a serious setback since the days of Asoka. The restoration of political power under the Vakatakas provided a strong stimulus and the whole country began to pulsate with new life. Under the patronage of the Vakatakas, the seeds of the political, religious, social and literary revival were freely and widely scattered in the country and bore a bumper crop under the rule of the benign imperial Guptas. Again, it was through the Vakatakas that the culture of northern India began to penetrate into the south.

The noble heritage of the revivalist movement was bequeathed by the Vakatakas to the Guptas. Chandragupta Vikramaditya, by defeating the last of the Saka Satrap of Malwa and Saurashtra, swept away the last vestiges of the foreign rule in India. This had the effect of reviving Hindu imperialism and confusion and disintegration gave place to unity. The worship of the old vedic gods and the revival of the Aswamedha sacrifices and other Vedic rites which had been started by the Nagas and Vakatakas found further favour with the Guptas. The Brahmanical religion reared its head once again. Buddhism lost royal patronage and the status of being the State religion. Once more it was becoming a mere sect. The literary and cultural renaissance which began under the

Vakataka princes flourished luxuriantly under the Guptas. The arts of architecture, sculpture and painting which had been encouraged by the Vakatakas flourished on large scale in the time of the Guptas when the whole country enjoyed blessings of peace and plenty. The master artisans breathed the spirit of the age and shook off the influence of the Greeco-Buddhist School of Gandhara in the sphere of fine arts. In place of the scenes and stories of the Buddhist literature the scenes and stories of the Hindu gods and *avataras* were used as the subject of skill both by the sculptor and the painter. In short, Indian intellect and character blossomed forth under the Guptas and the spirit of the age manifested itself in art, architecture, painting and music. The Gupta period, during which the Renaissance Movement attained its full development, accomplishing great achievements in the realm of art and literature, is rightly called the Golden Age of Hinduism and the period of Hindu Renaissance.

Apart from this, greater India sprang into existence during the Gupta Age. Indian culture spread abroad and India now entered on her glorious period of expansion and colonization and her foreign relations which had a setback were re-established with their former dignity and prestige.

The Gupta period is the Golden Age of Indian History ; the period of Hindu florescence rather than Renaissance. The Gupta Age, as noted above, is described as the Golden Age of the Indian History. This period is also characterised as the Age of the Hindu Renaissance and has been compared by European writers to the Age of Pericles in Greek History. The Gupta period really marks an epoch as it gave a great impetus to the revival of national spirit which manifested itself in almost every aspect of the life of the nation—political, social, religious, literary, artistic and economic. The national spirit appeared in the sphere of politics by reviving Hindu rule. Political domination of the foreign rulers—the Sakas, the Kushans and the Kshatrapas—was demolished and national independence was asserted under the Gupta rulers. Hindu imperialism was established and a large part of Northern India was consolidated under "one political umbrella". Another notable aspect of this national

spirit under the Guptas was the revival of the Hindu culture. The revivalist spirit culminated in the development and promotion of religion, literature, art and science.

In the sphere of religion, the activities of the national spirit found expression in what ideologists like Max Muller have been pleased to call Hindu Renaissance and consequently the Gupta Age is regarded as an era of Brahmanical revival. But a critical scrutinisation of the religious enthusiasm of this period shows that there was not, nor could be, anything called 'Renaissance' of Hinduism in this period. Because even during the period between the fall of the Mauryas and the rise of the Guptas, Hinduism was not moribound. Many foreigners, *e.g.*, the Yavan *duta* Heliodorous of Taxila, the Saka Satraps of Ujjain and some of the Kushan kings, succumbed to the influence of Hinduism which must have possessed a vitality strong enough to attract foreigners. Again, in the post-Mauryan period, Indian princes like Gautamiputra Satakarni kept up the tradition of Hindu religion by their reforming activities. In fact, the recrudescence of Hinduism or more precisely Brahmanism, in the Ganga-Jamuna plain, was as old as the time of Pushyamitra, founder of the Sunga dynasty, while in the south there was a long succession of royal dynasties that considered it as their proud boast to have repeatedly performed ancient Vedic rites like the *Vajapeya* and *Asvamedha*. No question of 'Renaissance' can, therefore, arise in the Gupta period. On the other hand, a period of religious revival is usually accompanied by the merciless persecution of the followers of other religions. But the Gupta period is conspicuously free from any trace of religious tyranny, intolerance and persecution. Pushyamitra Sunga is described by the Buddhists as a persecutor of their religion, but no such accusation is levelled against the Guptas. The famous general of Emperor Chandragupta II, Amrakardava, was a pro-Buddhist, while Vasubandhu, a Buddhist, was a personal friend of Samudragupta. According to the testimony of Fa-hien, the Buddhists were even supported and patronised by the Gupta sovereigns. In view of these facts it is safe to accept Dr. Coomarswamy's conclusion that the Gupta period saw the culmination and not the revival of Hindu

religion. The Gupta Age is one of florescence rather than of renaissance. It witnessed the flowering of the Hindu genius, and the Hindu culture reaching its high watermark. It was the triumph of Hinduism.

Salient Features of the Gupta Age

1. *Unification of the Country.* When, after approximately four hundred years of foreign rule, India achievcd her political emancipation, the country was divided into petty states. It were the Guptas who shattered the foreign power and again unified the country. With the rise of the Guptas who were able, versatile and mighty sovereigns, India was once again a united, centralised and strong national empire. The petty princes, small principalities and foreign monarchs disappeared and the reigns of the Gupta sovereigns ushered in an era of a strong, centralised, orderly and uniform government and progress.

2. *Efficient administration ; peace, order and security.* The Guptas had set up an efficient strong and well organised government. The country was now being governed under one uniform system of government by the Guptas. Their military and civil services were very highly systematized. The officers looked to the welfare of the subjects and suppressed confusion and anarchy. The government aimed at the moral, material and intellectual welfare and general prosperity of the people. Consequently perfect peace, order and security were established and people led prosperous, peaceful and happy lives.

3. *Growth of Trade and Commerce.* The Gupta period witnessed a very brisk trade—both internal as well as external. With the acquisition of Malwa, Gujrat and Saurashtra the Gupta empire established its commercial relations in the west with Europe especially the Roman Empire. Trade relations were also established with the eastern countries. These relations and contacts not only increased India's wealth and prosperity, but widened her outlook also. Heaps of foreign gold coins discovered in India reveal to us that gold from abroad was pouring in the country regularly.

4. *Greater India and Indian culture abroad.* It was in the Gupta period that India now entered in her glorious age of culture expanion and colonisation. Indian civilisation and

culture were spread in foreign countries like China, Java, Sumatra, Indo-China, Borneo, Bali, Central Asia etc. Extensive Indian colonies were founded and Greater India sprang into existence. India's ancient foreign relations which received set-back for some years were again established with all the grandeur and honour.

5. *Revival and progress of Sanskrit.* In this age Indian talents blossomed best and unprecedented intellectual progress was achieved. The Sanskrit language revived and the Gupta emperors liberally encouraged its use. Several literary works of great merit were produced. World-renowned poets like Kalidas, grammarian and statesman like Virsen Sab, dramatists like Vishakhadatta and Shudrak, celebrated Buddhist philosophers and authors like Asanga, Vasubandhu, Aryadeo, Dignag and Jain philosophers like Siddhasen Diwakar, Samantbhadra etc. flourished in the Gupta period. They have enriched the Sanskrit literature with their original contributions. Well-known works on astronomy and mathematics were produced and certain puranas and epics were given the final form in which they have come down to us.

6. *Fine Arts and Sciences.* The fine arts reached their excellence in the Gupta period. It was a most remarkable age from the artistic point of view. Architecture, sculpture, painting, terracotta, metallurgy, music, dancing etc.—all attained unprecedented achievement under the Guptas. World famous frescoes of Ajanta, beautiful images of gods, goddesses and human beings, the magnificent temples and artistic coins are the best specimens of the Gupta art. Vincent Smith rightly remarks that 'the three closely allied arts of architecture, sculpture and painting attained an extraordinary high point of achievement.' The artists and craftsmen of the age showed excellent skill in working metals. Besides this, whatever foreign influence was there on art (Gandhara style) completely disappeared in the period under review. Growth of fine arts and progress of sciences both were simultaneous. Excellent original works were produced in medicine, astronomy, astrology, mathematics, etc.

7. *Establishment of the Hindu Empire.* The Gupta sovereigns, completely shattering the power of the foreign rulers in India, established again the Hindu Empire and revived the

Hindu culture in the country. They are described as the last great Hindu empire-builders. The ancient traditions of imperialism had gradually died out after the Gupta period.

8. *High state of civilisation and culture.* Under the Gupta emperors India reached a high level of civilisation and culture. It was the age of the amazing fertilisation of national intellect and imagination, and many-sided cultural activities and achievements.

9. *Revival of Hinduism.* Some western scholars have remarked that the Gupta period witnessed a great revival in Brahmanism later on known as Hinduism. But they overlooked the fact that the triumph of Buddhism did not mean the extinction of Brahmanism. Even before the Guptas the Sungas, the Nagas, the Vakatakas, the Satavahanas and the Pallavas patronised Hinduism and followed its rites and ceremonies. The Gupta period is, therefore, not the age of revival of Brahmanical Hinduism. What the Guptas did was that they, by their powerful patronage, gradually and peacefully revived the position of supremacy which Brahmanism once held and from where it was temporarily ousted by Buddhism. The Guptas in fact strengthened the Brahmanical religion and gave it a strong new impetus.

Causes of the outburst of the intellectual and artistic activity and glorious achievements in the Gupta period. The greatness of the Gupta period consists in great intellectual activity, material prosperity and all round progress in literature, science and art. The following causes led to all this development :—

1. *Liberal and enlightened patronage of the Guptas.* The beneficent rule and the liberal and enlightened patronge of the Gupta Emperors for art and learning led to brilliant and fruitful results. They were men of catholic culture and learned scholars. They supported all intellectual and artistic activities and expressed their deep sympathies with the growing tastes and requirements of their subjects. The enlightened character of their government guaranteed complete freedom of religion and mode of life.

2. *Perfect peace and order.* The Guptas gave to the country political unity, enlightened government and unbroken peace, order and security. People were free from internal danger and

external aggression. This naturally provided a potent stimulus to great progress and prosperity in all spheres of life.

3. *Intercourse with foreign peoples.* Dr. Vincent Smith remarks, "The extraordinary intellectual vitality of the Gupta period undoubtedly was largely due to the constant and lively exchange of ideas with foreign lands in both East and West." India was in constant communication and cultural contact with China and Eastern Archipelago in the east and Rome and Persia in the west. With the extension of the Gupta Empire to the ports of Saurashtra and Gujrat India's foreign commerce and trade increased tremendously. This brisk contact and intercourse with the foreign people of both East and West led undoubtedly to a lively exchange of ideas which brought the faculties of the Indian mind into full and free play. The mutual contact of different cultures produces important cultural reactions and provides a great stimulus to healthy intellectual and artistic activities.

4. *Broad Indian vision.* The broad vision, wide outlook and inquisitive mind of the Indians, their modesty and absence of egoism contributed substantially to the progress of the age. Indians of the Gupta period were ever ready to acquire knowledge and truth from every community or tribe. Varahmihir, the well-known scientist of the period remarks, "The Yavanas are Mlechchhas. Yet the science of astronomy originated with them and for this reason they must be reverenced like gods."

5. *The scientific spirit of inquiry.* The Indians of the period possessed the scientific spirit of inquiry and exploration to acquire knowledge. In the realm of philosophy the Buddhists without restrictions had attained high intellectual flights and offered original contributions. Though Aryabhatta studied carefully the works and methods of his Indian predecessors and Greek astronomers, he refused to follow either of them blindly. His statement was, "I dived deep in the ocean of astronomical theories, true and false, and rescued the precious sunken jewel of true knowledge by means of the boat of my own intellect." This independent scientific spirit of inquiry and exploration contributed considerably to the development in the realm of art and science during the Gupta period.

Civilisation and Culture under the Imperial Guptas

The Administrative Organisation[1]

Republic States. In the Gupta period there were two types of States—monarchical and non-monarchical or republican. The chief among the republics were the Madras in the central Punjab, the Kunindas in the Kangra valley, the Yaudheyas in the south-eastern Punjab, the Arjunayanas in the Agra-Jaipur area and the Malavas in the central Rajputana and many small non-monarchical states like those of the Prarjunes, Sanakanikas, Kakas and Abhiras in Madhya Bharat. Each republic had the central assembly consisting mostly of the members of the landed military aristocracy. The central executive of the republics was originally elected by the central assembly, but it was tending to become hereditary in the Gupta Age. There was a growing tendency to accept the leadership of hereditary presidents, styled as Maharajas. However, it should be noted that the Gupta imperialism had not interferred with the autonomy of these respublics.

Monarchical Governments

The King. Hereditary monarchy was the prevailing form of government in the Gupta Age. The king's titles of *Maharaja* and *Rajadhiraja* were transformed into *Maharajadhiraja* and became very popular with great conquerors and imperial rulers of the period. The divine character of kingship received wide acceptance in the Gupta Age. Samudragupta is described in the Allahabad pillar inscription as a god who came down to live upon this earth. But no ruler claimed infallibility for himself or for his decrees on account of his theoretical divinity. The old theory still persisted that the rulers do not exist for their own good but owe a debt to the people which they can discharge only by good government. The ideal ruler is he who "possesses an inner soul pervaded by the inclination for the acquittance of debts and obligations and is occupied with the welfare of all mankind." 'Both the *Smritis* and the inscriptions

[1] For details, see *A New History of the Indian People*, Vol. VI by R. C. Majumdar and A. S. Altekar, Chapter XIV ; *Political History of Ancient India* by H. C. Ray-Chaudhary, Chapter XI.

of this age emphasise that a king can become a successful ruler only if he waits upon the elders, studies the art of government, cultivates religiousness and protects his subjects as efficiently as the divine guardians. He must make assiduous efforts to muster the political science, to cultivate fortitude and to acquire leadership ; otherwise he would fail in his task.'

The kings of this age were not only doughty fighters, rough soldiers and war-lords, but great lovers of learning and fine arts. Some of them were scholars and poets of no mean repute. Samudragupta and Chandragupta II deserve mention in this connection.

Powers and Prerogatives of the king—Kings were, as usual, the centre of all military, political, administrative and judicial powers of the kingdom. They governed with the assistance of a ministry but the ultimate responsibility of a final decision rested with them. They were often their own commanders-in-chief and they used to lead important military campaigns. All viceroys, governors and military and civil officers were appointed by, and responsible to, them. The secretariat at the capital generally worked under their personal direction and supervision. The provincial governors and their subordinate officers were under their control and guidance. To all appearance, kings were thus almost autocratic rulers. But in reality the case was considerably different. They shared their powers with ministers and other high state officers who were expected to guide and control the king, if he was acting against the established laws and customs of the kingdom. Kings had no legislative powers. They were expected to carry out rules and laws that were framed not by themselves but by the wise saints or *rishis* of the bygone ages. Extensive powers were delegated to local self-governing institutions, like the village *Panchayats* and town councils ; almost all functions of the government, excluding that of organising and maintaining the army, determining foreign policy and declaring a war and conducting a campaign, were discharged through the agency of the local bodies. Though there was no central popular assembly like the modern parliament, people did not suffer from the evil consequences of autocracy due to the delegation of large powers to the local self-governing institutions.

Ministry. As noted above, the king carried on the administration with the help of a ministry. *Smritis* and inscriptions frequently make references to ministers as *Mantris* or *Sachivas*. Though there is no definite information about the strength of the ministry or the portfolio held by its different members, one may not wrong in infering from the literature of the age that the ecclesiastical, military, revenue, land and trade departments were under the charge of different members of the ministry. 'It appears that the administrative heads of the different departments were often not distinguished from ministers, nor were the ministerial posts always regarded as superior to those of the departmental heads.' Military leadership was one of the important qualifications necessary for minister of the state. Harisena, who was a foreign minister under Samudragupta, was acting as a military general. 'Besides possessing a proficiency in the military art, ministers were expected to be well grounded in the political science as well; some of them, like Saba and Harisena, were also poets and authors.' There was it seems often a tendency for the ministerial office to become hereditary. For example the successors of Saba and Prithvisena who were the ministers of Samudragupta and Kumargupta I continued to hold the ministerial post for nearly two generations.

The Central Government. The capital of the kingdom was the headquarters of the central secretariat, whose chief officer was called *Sarvadhyaksha* or the general superintendent of the administration. He conveyed the orders of the central government to the provincial and district officers through special messengers and inspectors. Each office of the minister at the secretariat had its own seal with which its communications were invariably stamped for authentication. Though routine business of the day was transacted by each minister on his own responsibility, important official matters were referred to the whole council of ministers presided by the king himself. In king's absence the council's conclusions were referred to him for final approval and disposal. *Pratiharas* and *Mahapratiharas* were important officers in the royal court. They regulated its ceremonial functions and granted the necessary permits for admission to the royal presence in the court. The military depart-

ment it seems was undoubtedly the most important department at the centre. The revenue minister supervised the collection of taxes and revenues. Forests and mines of salt and metals were the state property and their administration was probably in the charge of the revenue department. The ecclesiastical minister was in charge of *Dharma* and morality of the realm. His department advised the king about the promotion of *Dharma*, suggested suitable occasions for charity, supervised the administration of public temples, encouraged promotion of learning and alloted grants to monasteries. The foreign minister, *Mahasandivigrahika*, worked in close co-operation with the king and the military department. A foreign minister was required to be a great diplomat.

The Feudatories. There was a large number of feudatory states which owed allegiance to the Guptas. The relation of the imperial power varied with different feudatory states—some enjoyed little internal autonomy, whereas a few others only recognised the Gupta sovereignty. The foreign department always insisted upon due obedience to the imperial orders by the feudatories. They were required to pay regular tribute periodically and visit the imperial court at suitable intervals for offering personal homage.

Kumaramatyas. A class of officers known as Kumaramatyas figure very prominently both in the seals and inscriptions of the Gupta period. They acted as generals, councillors and district officers. Some of them were directly under the sovereign ; others were attached to princes or placed under provincial governors. They resemble the officers of the modern Indian Administrative Service.

Provincial Administration

The empire was divided for administrative purposes into units or provinces which were further divided into *bhuktis* and *vishayas*. *Bhukti* was a very common designation corresponding to the size of the Commissioner's division in modern times and *vishayas* into which *bhuktis* were sub-divided were about the size of modern districts. Every *vishaya* was further sub-divided into a number of *gramas* or villages. The *bhuktis* were in charge of officers styled as *uparikas*, appointed by, and responsible to, the

emperor himself. *Vishayas* were governed by *Vishayapatis* who were either appointed by a royal officer styled *kumaramatya* or *ayuktaka*. The *vishayapati* was sometimes assisted in the work of the administration by the guild-president, the chief scribe and other leading men of the locality. They formed a district council known as *vishayamahattaras*. The popular element, thus, had a large voice in the district administration. There was no over-centralisation of government under the Guptas.

The town administration was carried on by an officer known as *purapala* assisted by the town council known as *Parishad.* The village administration was run by the village headman, designated as *Grameyaka* or *Gramadhyaksha*, and he was assisted in his work by a non-official council known as *Panchamandali* in Madhya Bharat and *Gramajanapada* in Bihar. The village council discharged almost all the functions of government. It looked after village defence, settled village disputes, organised works of public utility, acted as trustees for minors, and collected the government revenues and paid them into the central treasury.

Judiciary. The king was considered to be the incarnation of justice and so justice was often administered by the sovereign himself. There was also a high official at the centre for justice. There was the Supreme Court which tried important local cases and entertained appeals against the decisions of the lower courts in the moffusil. Then, there were judges at the headquarters of a district who had the assistance of the chief *Sethas* and *Kayasthas* of the locality, and representatives of commercial and official classes. In villages generally 'justice was administered by royal officials with the help of the members of the village council or assembly. In certain cases the assembly alone sat for judgment and passed sentences'. The jury system is found to have been in full swing, more in southern India. Judicial methods included trial by ordeal. In addition to official courts at the headquarters of districts and provinces there existed a number of popular special courts of self-governing corporations or guilds which took cognizance of disputes arising among their members. The Gupta Laws were few and mild. Most of the crimes were punished only by fines varying in amounts according

to the gravity of the offence. Capital punishment was unknown. Mutilations was the highest punishment for repeated rebellions.

Army. Indian armies in the Gupta period consisted mostly of elephants, infantry and cavalry. Chariots gradually fell into disuse and they no longer formed a part of the army. In the desert tracts of Rajputana camel corps were maintained. Each branch of the army had its different cadre of officers and they bore significant titles like *asvapatis*, *mahasvapatis*, *pilupatis* and *mahapilupatis* (captains and brigadiers in the cavalry and elephant corps). There were a number of *mahasenapatis* under the king who had their armies posted in different provinces. The army had different quarter-masters in different places, the seals of some of whom have been found. Weapons used in the army were bows and arrows, swords, battleaxes, spears, javelins, barbed darts etc. and the soldiers were provided with armours and helmets.

Revenue. The principal source of revenue was the land tax, known as *Bhagakara* in some localities and *udranga* in others. It was normally one-sixth of the produce of the land. Though its payment in cash was allowed, it was usually paid in kind and so the government had to make elaborate arrangements for the proper administration of its granaries. The next important sources of revenue were duties at ports, ferries, fortified stations and octroi duties, some of which were collected in kind and assigned to the village and town officers as part of their remuneration. The reference to *Bhuta-pratyay*, 'tax on what has come into existence,' indicates that most probably excise duties were imposed on articles manufactured in the kingdom. As the state claimed ownership in waste lands, forests, pastures and salt-mines, it derived considerable income by letting them out or selling their produce regularly. Extra taxation was resorted to in times of emergency from which even temples were not exempted. Extra cesses were also levied for special purposes by local authorities. The villagers and citizens had to pay additional imposts when officers of the Central Government came for inspection and police and military officers visited the locality to detect crimes or apprehend criminals.

Social Conditions[1]

General prosperity of the people. Thanks to the Chinese pilgrim, Fa-Hien, and contemporary epigraphs that we have interesting glimpses of the state of the country and the conditions of the people during the Gupta period. The pilgrim says that the people were virtuous, rich and prosperous and cities were teeming with population. The material prosperity of the Indians seems to have synchronised with the growth of humanitarianism. The bulk of the people was vegetarian and followed the principle of *ahimsa*. They kept no wineshops in their market-place or pigs and fowls in their homes. They did not eat meat, onions or garlic nor drank wine. The *Chandalas*, who were social outcastes, were the only people who hunted and ate flesh, etc. This was probably the outcome of the Buddhist ethics of Ahimsa, practised during the Mauryan Age and the post-Mauryan period ; that had almost altogether changed the tenor of the society. That the people in general had no want and little criminal tendency is testified to by the pilgrim, Fa-Hien, when he says that he was 'never molested on the high roads.' Rest-houses on the highways provided ample and comfortable accommodations. South Bihar was particularly noted for the wealth and prosperity of its cities and the benevolence and the righteousness of its people who established houses for dispensing charity and medicines. There the maimed and criplled, orphans and widows, children and diseased were fed and treated until they were healthy enough to leave these houses of charity or dispensaries.[2]

Social institutions. Social conditions underwent rapid changes during the Gupta period. Caste-system continued to

[1] Refer to *Life in the Gupta Age* by R. L. Saletore ; *A New History of the Indian People*, Vol. VI, Chapter XVIII by R. C. Majumdar and A. S. Altekar; *An Advanced History of India* by R.C. Majumdar and others, pp. 195-202 ; *History of Ancient India* by Dr. R. S. Tripathi, Chapter XIII, Section A ; *Age of the Imperial Guptas* by Banerjee ; *Ancient India* by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Book III, Chapter I, XVI to XX ; *Gupta Empire* by R. K. Mookerji.

[2] For more details refer to *A Record of Buddhist Kingdoms* by Fa-Hien translated by Legge.

exist in society. Some epigraphs point out that some of the most distinguished rulers of the age attempted to settle the system of castes and to keep the castes confined to their respective spheres of duty. But attempts in this direction were not always crowned with success. People changed their professions to suit their needs. We find members of the priestly and artisan classes taking to the profession of arms, and member of the kshatriya caste figuring as merchants and sometimes vaishyas as rulers; thus it is clear that professions were not very rigidly determined by caste. The caste-system had not yet assumed that rigidity which we associate with it at present in respect of intermarriage, interdining and professions. The pre-historic view that the sudra should be content merely to become the servants of the twice-born was neither accepted in theory nor followed in practice. Sudras in the period under review were permitted to become traders, artisans and agriculturists. Many of them were also enlisted in the army and rose to the position of captains and generals. However, untouchability existed in society more or less in its present form. The untouchables lived outside the main settlements and used to strike a piece of wood as they entered them, so that men might note their arrival and avoid their contact. They used to follow hunting, fishery, scavenging and similar despised professions. Marriage rules were still somewhat elastic and intermarriages between peoples of different castes, creeds and races were taking place. Inter-racial marriages appear to have been one of the ways by which foreigners were admitted into the framework of the society. Marriages were generally endogamous. But marriages of men of higher castes with women of lower castes often took place. They were known as *Anuloma* marriages. Such marriages were recognised as valid. Wife of a lower caste was permitted to participate in religious rituals. Marriages of women of higher caste with men of lower castes, known as *Pratiloma* marriages, also took place in society. Marriages with aliens were considered valid even by the conservative Brahmans. Thus the power of absorbing the foreign races continued to exist in the Hindu society in the Gupta Age. Slavery was prevailing but not in that rigid form as it was in Greece and Rome. Prisoners of war were often

reduced to slavery, debtors were unable to pay their debts, and gamblers, debtors and female slaves could regain their liberty if their dues were paid. Prisoners of war could do the same by finding a substitute. As in earlier centuries the joint-family continued to be the characteristic feature of the Hindu society. There was no property right for woman unless the father had no male issue. Ownership of property rested with the father. However, rights of sons and brothers to property were recognised. The custom of adoption was not much favoured.

Women. Pre-puberty marriages, as shown by the Smritis, became the order of the day and consequently the girls had hardly any voice in the settlement of their marriage. However, the practice of *Swayamvara* or self-choice of husband had also not gone out of use entirely. Though polygamy was widely prevalent, women were not ordinarily allowed to contract a second marriage. In well-to-do families, literary and cultural education was imparted to girls, and several women like Shil, Bhattarika etc. figure as authoresses and poetesses in our age.[1] Women of the upper classes took a keen interest in the cultural activities and a prominent share in administration of the age. In some provinces specially Kannad women acted as provincial administrator and village headmen. We have epigraphic evidences that in the Deccan women of the royal families were not only well-versed in singing and dancing but they also displayed publicly their proficiency in art. The queen-consort clearly occupied an important position in the Gupta period. The custom of *Sati* or burning widows on the funeral pyre of their husbands was gradually coming into general use, especially among the ruling families. Widow marriage was becoming unpopular. A widow was entitled to maintenance. Opinion differed about her right to her husband's property.

Diet, Dress and Ornaments. People were both vegetarian as well as non-vegetarian in the Gupta period. Although meat-eating was greatly disfavoured due to the rise of Buddhism, yet meat was taken on certain occasions and festivals. Betel leaf or *pan* was chewed after the dinner. Drinking was probably com-

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Position of Women by Dr. A. S. Altekar, pp. 11-20.

mon among the people of the lower castes. In the Deccan foreign wine was imported for the use of the royal families, but the *chandals* and a few low castes people used country liquor. The old Indian dress, consisting of an upper garment and a lower *dhoti*, continued to be the costume of the male population. The Scythians had, however, introduced coats, over-coats and trousers and they were often worn by Indian kings. The official court dress of the king was the old national one—dhotis and sashes. Head-dress was worn on auspicious occasions. Shoes were not very commonly used and most people went without them. The common people used to wear cotton dress but rich persons silken dress on festival days. In some parts of the country women wore a petti-coat below and a *sari* over it ; in other parts a long *sari* served both the purpose. A bodice was put on below the *sari* to cover the bust. Though jackets, blouses, and frocks were used by Scythian women, they did not become popular in Hindu society except among the dancing girls. Contemporary sculptures and paintings give us a graphic idea of the variety, designs and gracefulness of different ornaments of women. Gracefully designed ear-rings, gold and pearl necklaces of variety, nearly a dozen type of zones (*mekhalas*), a gauzy pearl ornament for breasts and thighs, and jewelled bangles were in vogue. Rings were quite common but nose-ring was still unknown. Men were also fond of ornaments. The paintings at Ajanta indicate that the fashions of dressing the hair were as numerous and graceful as the hair. The use of paints, pastes and lip-sticks was not unknown.

Amusements. "Dice and chess were the favourite indoor pastimes and hunting, ramfights and cockfights were the principal outdoor amusements. Ball game (*kanduka karida*) was popular with children and women ; the latter used to gather on festive occasions and have a variety of physical games."[1] Dramas, shows and fairs also provided a variety of entertainment. For measuring time there were water clocks in many places. A water clock was consisted of a small pot. It was kept floating in a vessel filled with water. There was a hole at the

[1] *A New History of the Indian People*, Vol. VI by R.C. Majumdar and A.S. Altekar, p. 354.

bottom of the pot and water slowly entered into it. It took 24 minutes to fill the pot completely. This period was called one *Ghatika*.

Economic Condition

Guilds. Trades and industries, both high and low, were organised in guilds. Contemporary inscriptions and seals refer to the guilds not only of traders and bankers but also of manual workers like weavers, oil-men and stone-cutters. The affairs of the guilds, which also acted as banks for their members, were managed by a president and a small executive committee of four or five persons. Guilds were autonomus bodies. They had their own rules, regulations and bye-laws which were usually accepted and respected by the State. Disputes among their members were settled by their own executive. They had their own funds and properties. Some guilds had their own soldiers for the protection of their goods, persons and property Many of them were rich enough to excavate a cave or build a temple or manage the affairs of local temples. Each guild had its own seals for business transactions and official correspondence. Partnership in business was widely prevalent.

Industries. Agriculture and other industries progressed considerably in the Gupta period. Wheat, rice, sugarcane, jute, oilseeds, cotton, *jwar*, *bajra*, spices, indigo, betel-nuts, betel-leaves, medicinal drugs and incense were the principal products of the country. Land was very fertile and was considered a valuable piece of property. Forest products like teak, sandal and ebony wood were commonly used. In some parts of the country mines of precious stones were successfully worked. Manufacture of the cloth was the main industry of the country. Its famous centres were located in Gujrat, Bengal, Deccan and Tamil country. Painting, architecture, sculpture, ivory work, inlaying, gold-smithy, black-smithy and ship-building were other principal crafts and professions of the age. Though coins were used but the barter system of exchange continued among the people.

Trade. The Gupta era was one of great brisk trade, both internal as well as external. Different varieties of cloth, food-grains, spices, salt, bullion and precious stones were the main

articles of internal trade. It was carried both by the road and the river. The trade between the northern and the southern India increased. Two land-routes most favoured were along the east coast across Jubbulpore and along the west coast via Karwar, Nasik and Ujjain. The acquisition of the maritime province of Saurastra by Chandragupta II opened up the western trade, and the wealth of the Roman Empire began to pour in India through the ports of the western coast—Kalyan, Chaul, Broach and Cambay. Tamralipti (modern Tamluk) was the principal port in Bengal and it carried on extensive trade with China, Ceylon, Java and Sumatra. The Andhra country was studded with a large number of ports at the mouth of the Godavari and Krishna, of which Kadura and Ghantasala are mentioned by Ptolemy. They were the main ports of the eastern coast. Kaveripattanam (modern Puhar) and Tondai were the principal ports of the Chola country. Korkai and Saliyur were the main harbours of the Pandya country and Kottayam and Muziris (modern Crangnore) of the Malabar coast. They were carrying on regularly a progressive brisk and increasing traffic with the Eastern Archipelago and China. 'The principal items of export were pearls, precious stones, cloths, perfumes, incense, spices, indigo, drugs, coconuts, ivory articles and the main items of imports were gold—bullion and coins—silver, copper, tin, lead, silk, camphor, corals, dates and horses." The Mauryans carried on their trade mainly with the east through the Kalinga ports, whereas the Guptas not only increased their eastern trade effectively but opened up the western sea-borne trade and this led to unprecedented economic prosperity.

General economic prosperity. On the whole people were economically prosperous. Brisk internal and external trade brought immense wealth in the country. This reacted favourably on the people who became exceptionally liberal in their charities and benefactions. Abundance of wealth enabled them to patronise and cultivate the finer arts of life. Besides this, living was very cheap and it is reported that the monthly cost of feeding a person sumptuously was approximately Rs. two.

Religions

1. *Growing Importance of Bhakti.* Religion was rich,

varied and vigorous during the Gupta Age. The most noticeable features in the religious life of the people during this age were the growing importance of *Bhakti* (devotion and loving faith in God), the love of fellow beings which found expression in benevolent activities, harmony among the followers of different sects and toleration of the opinions and faiths of others. The austere ideal of the impersonal god was replaced with personal god called by various names like Siva, Vishnu, Devi, etc. for the purpose of Bhakti. The personal god is conceived by the devotee as a Saviour worthy of trust and confidence, ready to shower blessings and grace on the devotee and always ready to safeguard him against dangers and misfortunes. The Absolute is linked with man not by divine knowledge but by devotion or bhakti. Bhakti is an important element of Vaishnavism and Saivism. "He who with unwavering practice of devotion (*bhakti-yoga*) does service to God has crossed beyond the strands" and is fit for salvation. Bhakti to Siva led to the hollowing out by a minister of Chandragupta II of a cave at Udayagiri in Madhya Bharat. Devotion to Vishnu and other Adorable Beings found vent in the construction by the followers of different creeds, sections of the community, royal personages, officials, rich persons, merchants, priests, guilds, etc. of lofty pillars, beautiful gateways, splendid monuments, huge awe-inspiring images and magnificent temples in honour of Vishnu, Kartikeya, the Sun, the Tirthankaras and the Buddha.

2. *Idol worship in temples.* The importance of Bhakti introduced idol worship in public temples. Consequently image worship with extensive rites and ceremonies became fairly common in the Gupta Age. Temple architecture came into vogue and traditions of sculpture evolved systematically in the period.

3. *Religious freedom, spirit of toleration and liberal charities.*[1] The wide prevalence of religious freedom, a feeling of toleration and harmony is very well illustrated by epigraphic evidences and literary references to the employment by Vaishnava

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1 See *Religious Toleration under the Imperial Guptas* written by Tripathi in Indian Historical Quarterly, Vol. XV, No. 1 (March 1939).

kings of Saivite and Buddhist officials and the love and affection felt by Jains for Brahmanism and by Brahmans for the Jainism. The Gupta rulers showed exemplary toleration to other faiths—Jainism and Buddhism. Private and royal gifts to Buddhist monasteries and Jain temples and installations of the statues of the Buddha and the Tirthankaras are on record. A large number of Gupta Buddha and Bodhisattva images discovered in different parts of India, especially in the sites of Sarnath, Mathura and Nalanda, testify to the religious freedom enjoyed by the Buddhists under the Gupta rule. The great Buddhist monastery of Nalanda was founded by Kumargupta I and additional buildings and grants were made by other Gupta rulers. To gain happiness and merit both in this world and the next many pious persons offered liberal charities to the monks, donations to monasteries and gifts of gold and village lands (*Agraharas*) to Brahmans and other religious institutions. Many were keenly interested in the installation of statues, construction of temples and offering grants and assigning villages for their maintenance. Buddhists and Jains also did not lag behind in charities. Frequently they installed the awe-inspiring images of the Buddha, Buddhisattvas and the Jain Tirthankaras. Well-to do Boddhists used to construct monasteries or *vihars* for the residence of the Buddhist monks and provided liberally for their food, clothes etc. In temples and religious institutions 'out of interest on permanent deposits (*Akshaya-nivi*) lights were maintained all the year round as a necessary part of worship.' Fa-Hien, the Chinese pilgrim to India, testifies to the benevolence, righteousness and toleration of the people of the Ganges valley. He remarks that people not only directed their attention to the ceremonial side of religion, *e.g.*, the celebration of processions of images of divinities, but also to the practice of liberal charity and non-violence.

4. *Final recension of the scriptures and the neo-Hinduism.* Another remarkable feature of the religion of the Gupta Age was that the Brahmans presented the main principles of the neo-Hinduism, philosophy and ethics in a popular and attractive form in Smirits, Puranas, Ramayan, Mahabharat etc. These sacred books received their final recension. The Brah-

mans have strengthened their new Hinduism by absorbing those elements of Jainism and Buddhism which had made these two sects most popular. Then, in the domain of philosophy there had been the systematic exposition of the teachings of various schools.

The important religious sects that flourished during the Gupta Age are as follows :—

Buddhism. Buddhism had powerful exponents in the Gupta Age in famous sages and philosophers Asanga, Vasubandhu, Kumarajiva, Paramartha and Dignaga. It was flourishing together with Brahmanism. It gradually lost ground in the succeeding centuries that followed the Gupta period. The withdrawal of the patronage by the rulers and a section of the richer classes does not seem to have affected the popularity of Buddhism. In the upper Gangetic Valley, Bihar and Bengal, Buddhism and Hinduism seem to have been equally popular, whereas Kashmir, Afghanistan and the Punjab were the strongholds of Buddhism in the Gupta Age as shown by the accounts of Fa-Hien. The specimens of art at Sarnath, Paharpur, Ajanta and Nagarjunikonda point out that the Gupta Age was the golden Period of the Buddhist art. Epigraphs found at Mathura, Kausambi, Sarnath and Casia (place of Buddha's death) show that they were sufficiently important centres of Buddhism. The same was the case with Bodh-gaya where a special rest-house was built in the Gupta Age for the Ceylonese pilgrims. In Bengal Mrigasikhavana was flourishing as the famous centre of Buddhist religion and culture. In western Maharashtra the Buddhist chaityas, cave temples and monasteries at Bhaja, Kuda, Mahar, Bedsa, Junnar, Kanheri, etc. were being patronised not only by aristocracy but by many guilds, artisans and business magnets. The numerous Buddhist caves at Ajanta and Ellora show that they were famous centres of Buddhism in eastern Maharashtra richly endowed by the State and society. Andhra country was studded with Buddhist *Stupas* and *Viharas* and in Tamil country, south, Kanchi was another famous Buddhist centre and it produced the celebrated Buddhist logician Dignaga and supplied an abbot to Nalanda in Dharampala. Similarly in Kathiawar, Valabhi was a famous

Buddhist centre having a number of monasteries. They were richly endowed by Maitraka rulers. All this is sufficient to show that *Buddhism still flourished and was never replaced by Brahmanism in the Gupta Age.* Though it lost the patronage of the Gupta rulers it enjoyed their toleration. The Mahayan cult of Buddhism was gradually becoming very popular and the Buddha image became quite well-known all over the country. The worship of the images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, the growth of the Buddhist pantheon, the ceremonial solemnities and religious processions were some of the salient features of Buddhism of the Age. There were magnificent *Stupas* and *Chaityas* built everywhere and the Buddhist establishments were decorated with artistic sculptures and paintings, describing the scenes of the last and earlier lives of the Buddha or the Blessed One. Buddhism was quite free from Tantric practices in the Gupta period ; but towards its end magic spells and charms, which paved the way for later Tantricism, were introduced. However, the period under review was the most creative one in the case of Mahayan School of Buddhism. The most original, daring and far-reaching contributions of this School to the progress of philosophy were made by its thinkers who flourished in the Gupta period.

Jainism. Mathura, Valabhi, Pundrevardhana North Bengal, Udayagiri in Madhya Bharat, Karnataka and Mysore in the South and Kanchi in Tamil were the famous centres of Jainism in the Gupta Age. Kadamba, Ganga, Pallava and Pandya rulers of the south richly patronised Jainism. A Council was held at Valabhi in 453—to settle the correct texts of the Jain scriptures. The intellectual urge which characterised the Gupta period resulted in the Jains starting to write a number of commentaries upon their sacred texts known as *niryuktis* and *churnis.* As Sanskrit was getting the upper hand in our period, famous works of Jainism were written in Sanskrit and not in Prakrit. Though there was a keen rivalry between Jainism and Saivism, it did not result in any mutual persecution.

Hinduism. Brahmanism or Hinduism had gained ascendancy in the Madhya-desa since the days of Pushyamitra and it enjoyed the almost uninterrupted patronage of the Guptas. In

fact it got a new lease of life. There are inscriptional evidences which show that innumerable endowments of lands and temples were made to the Brahmans by the kings, their ministers, guilds and well-to-do individuals. These temples were devoted to the various gods of the Hindu pantheon such as Siva, Vishnu and Sun. It appears that the worship of images, with its elaborate ritual, began during this period. Another instance of the florescence of Brahmanism is furnished by the fact that some of the Gupta sovereigns deliberately encouraged revival of the Vedic rites and the performance of sacrifices such as the *Asvamedha*, *Vajapeya*, *Agnisoma* and *Atiratra*. Samudragupta performed the horse-sacrifice, struck gold medals or coins to commemorate the event and added to his titles one of *Asvamedha parakramah* or the performer of the horse-sacrifice and his grandson Kumargupta I also assumed the same title. Still another instance of the florescence of Brahmanism and its recognition by the sovereigns of the day was the assumption of the title of *Parama Bhagwata* (worshipper of the god Vishnu) by Chandragupta II, Kumargupta I and Skandagupta—all of them were mighty emperors of the period. However, it should be noted that the performance of Vedic rites and sacrifices does not seem to have attained among the masses of the Hindus the same popularity as the Bhakti *marga* professed by the ardent sectaries devoted to the cults of Siva, Vishnu and associated deities.

As a result of the florescence of Hinduism, Vaishnavism was becoming popular in the Gupta Age. Vedic gods had become far and distant figures ; they ceased to command respect Vishnu, Shiva and other Pauranic deities had taken place of the Vedic divinities. Vishnu, the god of Preservation in the Hindu trinity, became a dynamic, faith-giving and hope-inspiring saviour of humanity, through the theory of *avatars*. Vishnu was incarnate from time to time in various forms to save the world from the assaults of demons or powers of Evil. Vishnu was now being worshipped under the name of Gadadhar, Janardan, Narain, Vasudeo, Govind, etc. The legends of *dasavatars* or the Ten Incarnations had been known well long before the Christian era, but the worship of *avatar* became popular only after the Christian era. One of the features of the religion

of the Gupta Age is the final emergence of the doctrine of Avatars or Incarnations. Krishna of Mahabarat was identified with Vishnu and his final transformation as the Saviour and Supreme God took place in the first centuries of the Christian era. But the theory that Krishna is the One, Final and Absolute, as advocated in the Bhagavad Gita, took its definite shape in the Gupta period. It is interesting to note that the cult of Rama had not become popular in the Gupta Age and Ram had not become the object of popular worship.

Equally popular with Vaishnavism was Saivism. If the Gupta, Pallava and Canga sovereigns were mostly Vaishnavas, the kings of the Bharasiva, Vakataka, Naga, Maitraka, Kadama and Parivrajaka dynasties were usually Saivas. Saba and Prithvisena, both officers under the Vaishnava Gupta Emperors were themselves Saivas. The custom of establishing a Siva temple was fairly popular in the Gupta period. Siva was the god to be worshipped and not loved, not a familiar personal deity like Krishna, but the stern Regulator of the world. Siva was worshipped in the Gupta Age in different forms. 'The majority of the Siva images of the Gupta period combine the phallic with the human form ; they are either *ekamukha-lingas* or *chaturmukha-lingas* with one or four faces of Siva carved upon them. Other emblems of this god-like trident and bull figure frequently on common seals.' Siva was called Samhu, Bhutapati, Shulpani, Mahadeva, Pinakin, Hara etc. The Pasupata sect of Saivism was most popular in the Gupta Age.

Another important aspect of the religion at this time was the Devi worship—the cult of the mother goddess. The worship of the Devi penetrated the main bodies of Saiva and Vaishnava sects. Among the goddesses Laxmi, Durga or Bhagawati, Parwati occupied prominent position. The Siva-Sakti doctrine became the cult of Lakshmi-Narayan and the Gita itself alludes to "My Parkriti". Some scholars hold the opinion that the rise of the Tantric creed in the Gupta period was due to this Devi worship.

Tantrikism was a significant development in religion. It is said that tantrikism represents happy blending of monism, unitarianism, universalism and the synthetism of the Vedic

scriptures. It aims to raise the whole of man into the divine perfection by awakening the power of consciousness latent in him in the form of *Kundalini*. Tantrikism emphasises absolute self surrender to the will of *Mahamaya* or the *Shakti* for the liberation or *mukti* and enjoyment of the divine bliss. The tantric creed advocates Shakti worship. 'God and nature were worshipped in the female forms and were regarded as embodiment of power.' Consequently various goddesses like Durga, Kali, Amba, Chandi, Ashtabhuja Devi etc. were worshipped publicly. Thus impersonal God was rendered dynamic through *Mahashakti* or mother goddess whose various names are mentioned above. Later on Tantrikism degenerated into rigid dry formulae, unhealthy practices and occult mysticism.

Apart from this, there were some temples of the Sun and the images of the Sun-god have also been found. There were Sun temples at Mandsaur (Madhya Bharat) and Asramaka in Vindhya Pradesh. Sun worship was also prevalent in Bengal as is evinced from the images of Sun-god discovered there. The epigraphical references show that the Sun was specially invoked for curing the diseased. The worship of the Nagas and Yakshas was fairly common among the lower classes of the population. There was a Yaksha temple at Padmavati near Gwalior in Madhya Bharat and a Maninaga shrine at Rajgir. Besides this, a temple of Kartikeya and images of Ganesh have also been discovered. Worship in public temples became fairly common in the Gupta period and the remnants of several shrines of the age have been found in Madhya Bharat region of Madhya Pradesh. Temples were gradually becoming significant centres of Hindu religion and culture. Their construction and decorations inspired and encouraged the architect, sculptor and painter to display the best of their talents; their service at public worship required the musician and the dancer and the public sermons delivered in their pandals afforded free scope to the genius of the Pauranika and the talents of the philosopher.

Popular beliefs, rites and ceremonies. People of this age had great faith in pilgrimage, *Sandhya* (morning and evening prayer), *devapuja* (the worship of tutelary deities), *pitripuja* (obla-

tions to the manes), *Smarta* sacrifices, *Sraddha*, sixteen *Samskaras*, *Vratas* or *upwas* on numerous occasions, charitable gifts and grants on the days of eclipses, equinoxes, *Samkrantis* and *Ekadasi Vrata*. Prayag was considered as a holy place. Death as Prayag was regarded as highly meritorious.

Literary Activity

Sanskrit Literature. During and after the reign of Asoka, the vernacular dialects had acquired such an importance that they were not only used in inscriptions, coins, legends and other official documents, but a number of literary works were also composed in them. This led to the theory that Sanskrit language was in a state of abeyance during the post-Asokan and pre-Gupta period. But this theory has now been completely exploded. As Prakrits began to develop and differentiate more and more from one another, Sanskrit attained the position of the *lingua franca*. Even the Mahayan Buddhists accepted it for their sacred cannon more than a century before the Gupta empire and rulers of the foreign race like Rudradaman I patronised Sanskrit. With the rise of the Gupta empire, the progress of Sanskrit got an additional momentum all over the country. The Guptas were so zealous admirers and liberal patrons of Sanskrit that they are said to have enjoined its use even in their palace and harem. They made Sanskrit the official language and all their inscriptions and documents were written in Sanskrit. In coins, legends and scriptures Sanskrit replaced Prakrit. This encouragement resulted in a great and all round development of Sanskrit literature and consequently the Gupta Age witnessed some of the finest productions in the whole range of Sanskrit literature. It is mainly for this reason that the Gupta period has been called the "Golden Age" of Sanskrit literature, and the classical period of Sanskrit literature.

The Gupta monarchs, being highly cultured, liberally patronised literature. They associated themselves with a number of intellectual celebrities who flourished in the favourable atmosphere of the age. Samudragupta, a gifted poet and musician, associated with the learned people and encouraged court poetry. Many poets received his patronage. The most notable poet of his court was his general and foreign minister

Harishena, the writer of the Allahabad panegyric, a poem of great merit. Chandragupta II followed in the footsteps of his father and counted among his high ministers a poet named Virasena Saba. Tradition associates the name of Kalidas, the greatest of Sanskrit poets, after the immortal writers of the two ancient epics, with Chandragupta II Vikramaditya. (But scholars differ widely about the date of Kalidas). He wrote a number of such excellent dramas like the *Sakuntala*, *Malavika-gnimitram*, *Vikramorvasi*, epics like the *Raghuvamsa* and lyric poetry like the *Ritu-Samhara* and the *Meghaduta*. 'His poetry is characterised by grace, simplicity and sentiment and is decorated by striking figure of speech.' His similes appeal to us by their beauty, appropriateness and variety. He is unsurpassed in describing love and pathos. His works are famous not only for their aesthetic beauty and poetic appeal, but for the ideals which they place before us. Another poet Vatsabhatti was a contemporary of Kumargupta I and II. Virasena Saba of Patliputra, a high official and member of the Court of Chandragupta II, is described as a great grammarian, politician and poet but one of his works has come down to us. Another famous poet of the age was Bhairavi, the author of *Kiratarjuniya*. He flourished in the middle of the 6th century. It is possible that Subandhu, the famous author of the *Vasavadatta*, flourished in the Gupta Age. The reputed Buddhist writer, Asanga, the author of the *Yogachara-bhumisastra*, the *Mahayan Samparigraha* and other similar works and his brother Acharya Vasubandhu, who wrote many books on Mahayan and Hinyan Buddhist philosophy and Dignaga, the author of the *Pramana Samuchchaya* were the most distinguished among the Buddhist writers of the period. Parmartha was another Buddhist saint and scholar of the age who wrote a biography of Vasu-bandhu. Many of the celebrated Buddhist philosophers and writers flourished in the Gupta Age. According to most scholars Visakhadatta, the author of *Mudrarakshasa* and lexicographer Amarsingha, the author of *Amarakosha* (the most popular Sanskrit dictionary) belonged to the Gupta Age. Shudraka, the author of *Mricha Katika*, a play full of life and admirable exposition of action ; and Dandin, the author of *Kavyadarsa*, a

treatise on the art of poetry, and *Dasakumar Charita,* a prose romance, also flourished in this period. Vatsayan who wrote renowned *Kamasutra* lived in the age. The witty, elegant and versatile Bharthrihari, recluse, courtier, philosopher, grammarian and poet in turn, was typical of the many-sided culture of the period. He was the famous author of the three *Satakas*. No outstanding work on Sanskrit grammar was written in this age, because the works of Panini, Katyayana and Patanjali on grammar were most popular. However, among the Buddhists Chandragomin's work on grammar, *Chandra-Vyakarana*, gained popularity. He was a Buddhist scholar from Bengal. Metres were very well dealt with in a section of the *Brihat-samhita*, *Srutabodha* (a hand book on metres) and a section of *Agnipurana*. Though no works on history were written in the Gupta Age, two famous history works *Dipavamsa* and *Mahavamsa* were written in Ceylon. In the realm of the Arthasastra a minister of the Gupta rulers had written the *Kamandakiya-Nitisar*. The Sanskrit literature's famous book of Fables, the *Panchatantra* (composed by Vishnuvarman) and the *Hitopadesha* or the "Book of Wise Counsels" were probably composed in this period. They have been translated in more than fifty languages of the world. Their stories were carried to the courts of Baghdad, Byzantine and Cairo and ultimately before the 11th century they found their way to the West, where they had an immense influence upon the literature of medieval Europe. In the sphere of philosophy, it is generally held that the Sankhya system, which was undoubtedly many centuries older, found new strength in the commentaries of Varsguganya and Ishwara Krishna of whom we know from Buddhist sources. The most popular and most authoritative work on the *Sankhya* system was *Sankhyakarika* written by Iswarakrishna in the 4th century A.D. Vatsyayana had composed the *Nyaya-bhashya* on the *Nyaya* philosophy, Prasastapada had written *Padarthadharma Samgraha* on the *Vaiseshika* philosophy and *Vyasa-bhasya* was composed on the *Yoga* philosophy. Other celebrated philosophers like Upavarsha, Bhartriprapaneh and Baudhyayan probably flourished in the Gupta Age. To sum up, the six systems of the Hindu philosophy were clearly systematised and most of their authori-

tative and standard works were given their present form in the Gupta period.

To give a new and more popular shape to the literature of Hinduism, the Brahman leaders of the society re-wrote and re-edited some of their sacred books. Several *puranas* received final recension and the Epics, several *Smritis* and commentaries on the *Sutras* and many other ancient Sanskrit religious books were composed in this period. In the *Puranas* more facts were added to the history of the royal dynasties and many chapters were written in glorification of Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma, but chapters emphasising *Vratas* and *Anushthan* were not yet added. The Smritis of *Yajnavalkya*, *Narada*, *Katyayan* and *Brihaspati* were probably composed in this period. Among these the *Yajnavalkya Smriti* is the most standard, systematic and well balanced work. On account of such literary activities the Gupta period is described as the "Augustan Age of Hindu Society."

Evolution of the Prakritas. Apart from Sanskrit, the languages of the masses known as *Prakritas* also developed. The *prakrit* avoided harsh combination of consonants and gave preference to final vowels. The earliest Prakrita was Pali, used by the Buddhists for their scriptures as well as preaching. The Gupta period witnessed the evolution of other prakritas such as *Sauraseni* used in Mathura and its vicinity, *Ardha-magadhi* spoken in Oudh and Bundelkhand, *Magadhi* in modern Bihar and *Maharastri* in Berar. As Sanskrit was being gradually confined to the scholars, these prakritas developed their own literature and then they were styled as *Apabhramsh.* Later on modern vernaculars of India like Hindi, Bengali, Gujrati, Marathi, Punjabi, Uria etc. were evolved from these Prakritas.

The art of writing. The art of writing had developed considerably. Paper was not known to the people but they used birch-bark, palm leaves, wooden boards or tablets, copper plates and wooden pens for writing purpose.

Sciences.

Great progress was made in the domain of scientific studies during the Gupta period. The formulation of the

theory of zero and the consequent evolution of the decimal system are to be credited to the thinkers of this age. Aryabhatta, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta were in their own days "the foremost astronomers and mathematicians of the world." In his famous work, the *Surya Siddhanta*, Aryabhatta examines and explains the true causes of the solar and the lunar eclipses. His calculation of the size of the earth is very near that estimated by modern astronomers. Aryabhatta born in 476 A.D. in Patliputra was one of the greatest scientists that India produced. He was the first Indian astronomer to discover and declare that the earth rotates round its axis. He worked out and explained the variations in planetary motions, details about the eclipse, the sun, the moon etc. He was the first to discover sine functions and utilise them in astronomy. One of his disciples Latadeva was very famous as the expert in the whole science (*Sarva Siddhantaguru*). It is said that it was he who expounded *Paulisa* and *Romaka Sidhantas.* Aryabhatta's famous work *Aryabhattiyam* written in 499 A. D. deals with arithmetic, geometry, algebra and probably trignometry. The *Brihat Samhita* of Varahamihira deals with astronomy, physical geography, botany and natural history. His other works were *Pancha Siddhantika*, *Brihajjataka* and *Laghujataka.* Hindu astronomers of the age had discovered that the heavenly bodies shine by reflected light; they were aware of diurnal motion of the earth on its axis and had calculated its diameter. Brahmagupta, another famous astronomer and mathematician of the age, anticipated Newton by declaring that "all things fall to the earth by a law of nature ; for it is the nature of the earth to attract and keep things." The Vaisesika School of Physicists propounded the atomic theory. Metallic preparations for the purpose of medicine and references to the use of mercury and iron by Varahamihira and others indicate that much progress was made in chemistry. The medical schools of Charaka and Susruta continued to flourish in the Gupta Age. The most famous works on medicine were the *Charaka Samhita* and the *Susruta Samhita.* Another well-known work composed in this period was the *Navanitakam.* It is a manual of recipes, formulae, and prescriptions, borrowed from the *Bhela-Samhita*, the *Charaka*

Samhita and the *Susruta Samhita*. It was discovered in 1890 at Kuchar in Eastern Turkistan. Palakapya had written *Hastya-yurveda* on the Veterinary Science. It is said that methods of distillation and disinfectants were discovered by Nagarjun and inocculation for small-pox was known to the people. Large number of medicinal drugs were produced and much attention was paid to sanitation and hygiene. Medical science which made considerable progress was widely studied and Sanskrit medical treatises were the base of much of the later Arabian learning which reached Europe in the Middle Ages. Much attention was devoted to surgery and surgical instruments. Dissection was practised, and students were trained in "holding the lancet, in cutting, making and piercing with it, in extracting darts, in cleansing wounds, in causing them to dry up, the application of ointments, and in the administration of emetics, purges and oily enemas."

Education

Education under the Guptas progressed considerably. There were no well-organised state educational institutions as we have today. Private teacher or *Guru* was the pivot of the education system of the age. He used to educate students as a matter of duty. The parents or the guardians of the students used to pay him some honorarium for the purpose. Occasionally State authorities, well-to-do citizens and merchants offered grants and donations to him. Renowned *Acharyas* or professors and scholars used to give education individually and privately in their homes or *Ashramas*. Often they resided in holy places, big towns and capitals of kingdoms. In this age the study of the Vedas fell into the background. In place of the Vedas Puranas, smritis, logic, philosophy, metaphysics, Sanskrit grammar, Dharm or Law, Astronomy-cum-astrology etc. were studied with great enthusiasm. Secular subjects were also taught. Technical education was generally imparted in the family by the master craftsman. Primary education, given by teachers known as *Daraka-charyas*, consisted mainly of the three R's. Method of instruction was mostly oral and occasionally discussions and debates were held on significant subjects. There were neither fees nor examinations, nor conferring of degrees after the completion of the education.

Though the upper classes like the Brahmans, Kshatriyas etc. maintained a high percentage of literacy, most of the sudras and untouchables were illiterates. Female education suffered a definite set-back. As regards famous centres of education, the fame of the ancient and well-known centre of education Taxila, was on the decline. In the fifth century A.D. there was nothing left of educational importance. But Nalanda was rising to its fame under the liberal patronage of the Gupta sovereigns. This Buddhist monastery was becoming a famous University and a large number of monasteries or *Vihars* were constructed there to provide accommodation to the growing number of monks and students. Other important Buddhist monasteries began to develop into the centres of education during the later half of the Gupta period. They were monastic colleges. Patliputra, Valabhi, Ujjayini, Padmawati, Vatsagulm (Basin), Pravaropura, Mathura, Ayodhya, Banaras, Nasik and Kanchi were other centres of education. Kanchi was well-known centre of both Hindu and Buddhist learning. *Agrahara* villages had also become famous centres of higher learning. They had several learned Brahmans and scholars. They enjoyed the shares in the revenues of these villages assigned to them for their maintenance by the State authorities. In South India centres of higher education, called *Ghatikas*, were probably located in temples.

Arts[1]

In the domain of fine arts, the Gupta period reached a high level of excellence. 'The Gupta art marks the zenith in a perfectly norm cycle of artistic evolution.' The glories of the Gupta Age have been made permanent through the visible creations of its fine arts. The Age witnessed an unprecedented artistic activity all over India. The Greek influence on the Indian art manifesting itself in the Gandhar School of art, moved on from Taxila to Mathura and Sarnath. But before reaching Patliputra it completely disappeared in the Gupta

For details of the Gupta Art, refer to *Archaeological Survey of India*, Vol. X, by Cunningham ; *Indian Architecture* (*Buddhist and Hindu*), Vol. I, Chapter X by Percy Brown ; *Gupta Art* by Dr. V. S. Agarwal.

period and art became entirely and truely Indian. 'Different forms of art, *e g.*, sculpture, architecture, painting and terracotta attained a maturity, balance and naturalness of expression that have for ever remained unexcelled.' Techniques of art were perfected, definite types were evolved and ideals of beauty were formulated with precision in the Gupta Age. There was a thorough intelligent grasp of the true aims and essential principles of art, a highly developed aesthetic sense expressed in all works of art and a masterly execution with steady hands. Some of our most beautiful and splendid monuments which represent the very acme of India's artistic achievement, among which the Ajanta frescoes take precedence, are a noble cultural heritage of the Gupta Age. The Gupta art established such ideals and models which not only influenced the Indian art for centuries together, but travelling in the neighbouring countries, towards the east and the north, it created a living force in art there.

Sculpture. The sculpture of the Gupta Age reveals exquisite beauty of execution and a high degree of skill possessed by its workmen. 'The most important contribution of the Gupta Art is evolution of the perfect types of divinities, both Buddhist and Brahmanical.' Under the stroke of the master's chisel the stone was transformed into figures of permanent beauty and grace. A large number of Buddha and Bodhisattva images of the Gupta period, made of stone and bronze, have been discovered in the different excavated sites of India and in the largest number in Sarnath and Mathura. The artist of the Gupta Age introduced some innovations with reference to the Buddha statue. He introduced beautiful curly hair in contrast to shaven head of the Kushan Buddha statue ; secondly bands of graceful ornamentation of different kinds introduced in the halo of the Buddha figure was another feature. Thirdly, transparent drapery, plain or with folds, clearly revealing the form was a notable distinguishing feature. Lastly, there was a large variety of *mudras* (hand poses and attitudies.) There appeared more spiritual calmness of face and eyes of the Buddha image than is found in their Kushan and Gandhara counter-parts. The Gupta Buddha image was absolutely independent of the Gandhara School. Among



Red Stone Statue–Buddha 5th Century

the many Buddha images discovered at Sarnath the most outstanding one is the seated Buddha image. It is posed on a diamond seat in the preaching mood. The image has spiritual expression, the calm smile and the serene contemplative attitude. Another image of the standing Buddha discovered at Mathura had excellent combination of compassion and spiritual sentiments. Such images are the highest triumph of Indian art. They illustrate the synthesis of the external form with the inner spirit. They reveal 'the fullest fruition of the orignal genius in carving out a figure in perfect harmony with its spiritual conceptions.'

The images of Siva, Vishnu and other Brahmanical gods like Sun, Kartikeya have been also found. Saivism and Vaishnavism were popular sects in the Gupta period and so the artists handled the complicated legends and myths of the many incarnations of Vishnu and Siva with an easy mastery. Grand mythical conceptions of religious and mataphysical importance were visulised by the engraver. The epic stories from the Rama and Krishna cycles are represented with effective success in the Deogarh temple sculptures. Some images of Vishnu and Siva carved under the Guptas are excellent specimens of sculpture.

On the whole, the images of the Gupta period "present a beautiful figure, full of charm and dignity, a graceful pose and a radiant spiritual expression. In general a sublime idealism, combined with a highly developed sense of rhythm and beauty, characterises the Gupta sculptures, and there are vigour and refinement in their design and execution."[1] In short, the Gupta sculpture exhibits pleasing characteristics—grace, refined restraint of treatment, physical beauty, gracious dignity, elegance, tranquility and spirituality. These qualities are not found elsewhere in Indian sculpture in the same degree.

Architecture. The wave of creative enthusiasm, the intensely religious purpose and the deep sense of aesthetic beauty behind it that swept all over the country in the Gupta Age are seen at their best in the architectural activity of this period

[1] *An Advanced History of India* by R. C. Majumdar and others, p. 140.

which produced magnificent Brahmanical temples. Unfortunately few Gupta temples and buildings have survived the destruction carried on by the Huns and Muslim invaders, but the few that exist testify the excellence of the architecture of the times. Among those that survived the following are well-known: The Dasavatara temple at Devagarh in the Jhansi district ; the temple at Bhitargaon near Kanpur ; Vishnu temple at Tigawa, Jubbulpore district ; Siva temple as Bhumara ; the Siva temple at Khoh containing a beautiful Ekamukhi Siva-linga ; a beautiful Parvati temple at Nachna-Kuthara ; a temple in a ruined state but of great artistic merit at Dah Varbatia on the banks of the Brahmaputra (Darrang district, Assam) and two Buddhist shrines at Sanchi and Buddha Gaya. These temples are well-designed, and consist of a square chamber, a cella (shrine), with a portico or verandah as essential element. They are decorated with fine sculptured panels, but the decoration is properly subordinated to, and is in full harmony with the architectural plan of the buildings. High and elaborately worked towers (*Sikharas*), which surmounted the roofs of temples in later ages, had not yet made their appearance. But the beginnings of this development are seen in the Bhitargaon temple and the miniature representations of temples on relief sculptures of the Gupta period.

A large number of Buddhist architectural buildings—*vihars*, *chaityas*, and *stupas*—were constructed in the Gupta period. Such buildings have been discovered at Jaulian, Charsadda, Mohra Maradu, Rajgir, Sarnath, Nalanda and ancient sites near Pushkalavati. The Dhamekh Stupa at Sarnath, 128 feet in height, famous for its variety of geometric patterns, the scroll work and conception of artistic designs, 300 feet high Buddha temple at Nalanda and a huge splendid monastery or *vihar* at Mohra Maradu, providing all kinds of facilities for the luxurious mode of life of the monk-residents, belong to this period.

As regards the cave architecture, excavation of caves was well practised and the main cave structures of our period belong to Ajanta and the Andhra country. Some of the *Chaitya* and *Vihara* caves at Ajanta and those of Ellora are undoubtedly among the best artistic monuments of the Gupta Age. They

strike a new line in art by the great beauty of their pillars of varied designs and fine paintings. The caves at Mogulrajapuram, Undavilli and Akhannamadana in south, and the Brahmanical cave temple at Udayagiri near Vidisha (Bhilsa) also belong to the Gupta Age.

From the sculptural representation of Amaravati, Nagarjunikonda and other places, we get some idea of the secular buildings of this age. Imposing structures several storeys high were constructed. They had arched or latticed windows, pilasters and polygonal pillars, open or canopied terraces and balconies and separate entrances or five arched *toranas*. The royal palaces had pavilions, audience halls, both private and public, and concert halls. Palace apartments were generally decorated with various kinds of paintings.[1] Cylindrical and polygonal pillars with fine capitals and *kalasha* motif at the base and charming decorations are the special characteristics of the Gupta architecture.

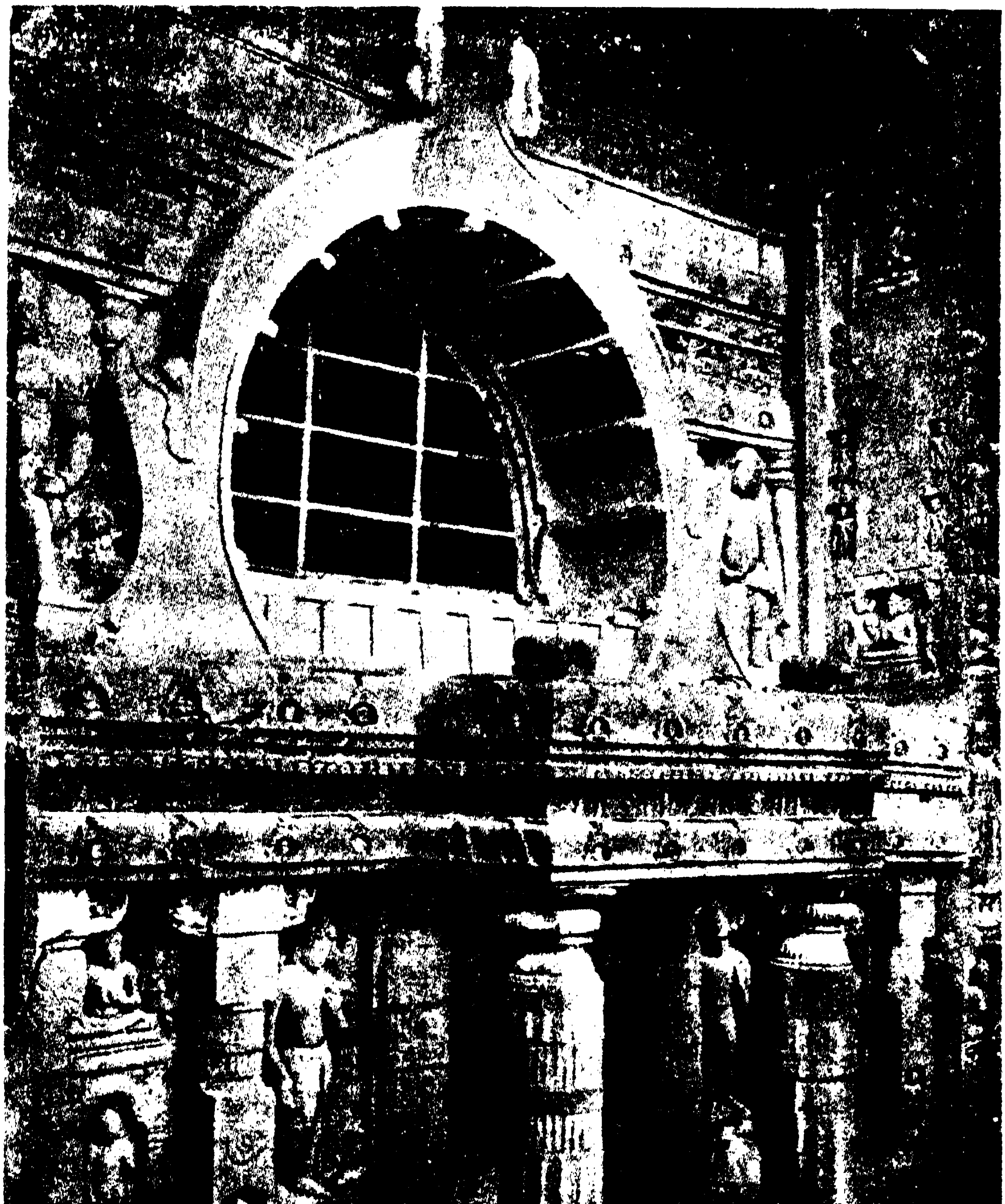
Terracotta. Terracottas formed another branch of the fine arts of the Gupta Age. Gifted clay modellers created things of real beauty and terracotta figurines showing amorous scenes or forms of exquisite beauty were displayed in houses, temples, *stupas* and were in great demand on festive occasions. The terracotta figures may be classified under three heads : (*a*) gods and goddesses, (*b*) male and female figures, (*c*) animal figurines and miscellaneous objects. They surpassed the bronze figurines in beauty. Such terracotta figures have been discovered at Rajghat, Ahichatra and Bhita.

Painting. The art of painting reached its height of glory and splendour in this age. The most celebrated examples of Gupta painting are preserved in the wall frescoes of the Ajanta caves in Andhra State, the Bagh caves in Madhya Bharat (M.P.), the Sittanavasal temple in Madras state and in the rock-cut chambers at Sigiriya in Ceylon. Ajanta is near a small village known as Faridpur in Andhra state approximately thirty-six miles from Jalgoan railway station. The site of Ajanta was selected by those who had great appreciation of the beauties of

A New History of the Indian People by Majumdar and Altekar, pp. 460-461.

nature. The situation is romantic and full of natural scenes. The Ajanta caves are situated in a long hill facing a deep valley. The caves are twenty-nine and they are excavated in horse-shoe shaped hill. The Buddhist monks began the excavations in the third century B.C. and continued for nearly a thousand years. The caves have marvellous combination of architecture, sculpture and painting. Architecturally all the caves are interesting and dignified, but there the best specimen of the sculpture is the figure of Nagraj seating with his queen in cave IX. Innumerable figures of Buddha and other human beings also undoubtedly reveal the splendour of sculpture. But Ajanta is most famous for its frescoes now surviving in six caves only. These fresco-paintings, executed over a period of centuries, have extorted the unstinted admiration of the whole world.

The subjects of these paintings are threefold—(i) decorative designs like patterns, scrolls, flowers, trees, animals, mythological beings, like *Yakshas*, *Gandharvas*, *Apsaras*, etc.; (ii) portraits of the various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas both historical and legendary and (iii) narrative scenes mostly from Jatakas. Incidents and scenes from the life of Gautama Buddha were freely painted. These paintings reveal to us that the Indian artist has not left any field of human activity untouched. Secular and religious life together with several aspects of animal as well as vegetable kingdoms have been painted successfully. The artist attempted to encompass in his vision the entire universe in all its phases and planes of existence. Sentiments of friendship, sorrow, compassion, pathos, love, affection, mercy, indignation, modesty, excitement, felication, contempt enthusiasm etc. have been expressed with marvellous effect. Flowering trees, flowing streams, roaming denizens, soaring birds, fighting or springing beasts, blooming flowers, luxuriant creepers, jumping monkeys and deer and elephants have been painted with close observation of nature. From the great Bodhisattva Padmapani and Avalokitesvara, princes, sages, heroes and harem down to the cruel hunters, butchers, wicked persons ; from meditating Buddha to couples indulged in love and romance and maidens busy gracefully in their toilets ; from court scenes to poor little beggars—all have been painted gracefully against the background of marvellously varied scenes.



Façade of Cave Temple—Ajanta.

A fine conception, brilliancy of colours, admirable drawing, delicacy of lines and richness of expression invested these paintings with a unique charm which we can only faintly realise in their present ruined condition. Though these paintings and their scenes pulsate with feelings of human life, yet they retain a spiritual quality, never degenerating into voluptuous productions. There life stands transfigured ; its earthly qualities withering away and everything assuming a cosmic significance.

'The style of the artist is narrational where the device of suggestion is used in a masterly fashion.' Economy of line, dramatic expressiveness of detail, strong but sensitive line, suggestive use of colour, dexterous composition indicating refinement and harmony of form, the impressiveness of attitudes and poses, supernatural grace, rhythmic quality and the nobility of expression are some of the salient characteristics of the Ajanta frescoes.[1] These salient features introduce there an atmosphere of great spiritual beauty and significance. A Danish artist remarks that 'they (Ajanta paintings) represent the climax to which genuine Indian art has attained' and everything in these pictures from the composition as a whole to the smallest pearl or flower testifies to depth of insight coupled with the greatest skill'. The work of Ajanta is "so accomplished in execution, so consistent in convention, so vivacious and varied in design and full of such evident delight in beautiful form and colour'"[2] that the Ajanta frescoes are ranked with the best art of the ancient world. According to Sir John Marshall these paintings have rhythmic composition, instinctive beauty of line, majestic grace of figures and boundless wealth of decorative imagery ; and consequently these frescoes have exerted a far-reaching influence 'on the art, not of India alone and her colonies, but of every other country to which the religion of the Buddha penetrated.'

The paintings in the Bagh caves in southern Madhya Bharat are ranked with those of Ajanta on account of their variety of design, vigorous execution, decorative quality and secular nature.

[1] *Ancient India* by Dr. B.G. Gokhale, p. 216.
[2] *The Paintings of the Buddhist Caves of Ajanta* by Griffiths, p. 7.

Metallurgy. The art of casting metals reached a degree of development which may well be regarded as wonderful. The high degree of proficiency in metal work is revealed by the colossal Buddha image from Sultanganj, 7½ feet high weighing over a ton, cast in pure copper and another image of the Buddha about 80 feet high seen by Hieun Tsang at Nalanda. The iron pillar at Delhi, near the Qutab Minar, created by Kumargupta I in 415 A.D. in honour of his father is another marvel of the striking metallurgical skill of the artists. It is a solid shaft of pure, rustless wrought iron, 16 inches in diameter and 23 feet high and weighs about six tons. It is still standing with the least sign of rusting or corrosion, though it has been exposed to the sun, rain and storm for the last 1500 years. How it was manufactured is a mystery even now. These fine gold coins of the Gupta Emperors, in addition to their high bullion value, possess considerable artistic merit.

Music. Together with other fine arts music, both vocal and instrumental, progressed well. Singing, dancing and the art of stage reached a high level of excellence in the Gupta period. The Gupta Emperors were lovers of music and they patronised it very liberally. The effigy of Samudragupta playing on the *Vina* is well marked on the coins. It indicates the keen interest of the Emperor in music. Samudragupta had attained proficiency in the art of playing on the *Vina*. The liberal patronage to the musicians in his court reveals clearly his love for music. Teachers and professors of music and dancing found favour and engagement with royalists. "Dancing saloons, specially constructed for the purpose, seem to have formed an integral part of the royal palace."[1] We get a glimpse of the art of singing and dancing in the sculptures of the period. In the famous Siva temple of Bhumra the *ganas* or devotees of Siva are carved out playing with various musical instruments. Similarly a dancing woman is engraved on a huge piece of stone discovered at Sarnath. She is surrounded by numerous maidens playing charmingly on several musical instruments like flutes, trumpets, *Mriganda*, etc. Paintings in the Bagh caves depict two groups of maidens dancing and playing on instruments. Besides this,

[1] *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III, p. 586.

there is a vivid description of singing, dancing and the art of stage in several dramas written during the period under review. Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitra* gives a fine definition and appreciation of *natya*. There is a beautiful pen-picture of an ideal dancer. All these are enough proofs for the conclusion that the art of stage and dancing was very popular and music had made considerable progress in the Gupta period.

Salient Features of the Gupta art. To conclude, the chief characteristic features[1] of the Gupta art were refinement or elegance, simplicity of expression and dominant spiritual purpose. These characteristics gave Gupta art an individuality, which has remained unchallenged so far. Firstly, this art was marked by grace, refinement and restraint. The Gupta artist no longer relied on volume to give an expression of grandiose but he focussed his attention on elegance which was not lost in the exuberance of ornaments. The keynote of his art was balance and freedom from the dead-weight of traditions and conventions. Secondly, whatever emerged from the hands of the Gupta artists appeared perfectly normal and natural. There was no place for over-elaboration. Thirdly, the Gupta art had its own concept of beauty. There was a keen sense of aesthetic culture. Art was cultivated to deepen the consciousness of the soul and awaken it to a new lofty sense of spiritual joy and nobility. *The path of virtue is the path of beauty* appears to be the guiding impulse of the Gupta art. To create lovely forms and charming figures and harness them to the needs of the highest life—it was this golden harmony that made the Gupta art a thing of perpetual and inexhaustive attraction and popularity. Fourthly, the Gupta art derived its basic inspiration from profound religious and spiritual ideals. It served channels of religion by constructing splendid religious edifices, charming images and painting forms of gods, godesses, sages and human beings. But religion did not impede the free and full development of art on the purely aesthetic side. In the narrative paintings of Ajanta charming and delicate scenes from contem-

[1] *A New History of the Indian People* by R. C. Majumdar and A. S. Altekar, Vol. VI, pp. 468-471.

porary life are inserted freely. Scenes of home and palace life, toilet and sports, festivities and processions, forests and gardens with a buoyant feeling and pulsating life have converted these paintings into a record of permanent value, charm and beauty. Fifthly, the sensuousness of the Gupta art is restrained by a conscious moral sense. Nudity is entirely eliminated in Gupta art. Drapery in the Kushan art was employed to reveal the charm of the flesh, whereas in the Gupta art drapery was used to conceal those very charms. Sixthly, "the intellectual element dominates Gupta art and keeps under control the highly developed emotional display and the exuberance of decorative elements which characterise the art of succeeding ages.[1] Seventhly, the Gupta art expressed inner spirituality in external forms with great grace, refinement, beauty and charm. Eighthly, the foliated scroll is another special characteristic of the Gupta art, responsible for the great achievement in sculpture. Lastly, the Gupta art has its simplicity of style and felicity of expression by which great ideas take a creative form in a natural and easy manner. The technique and subject of the Gupta art were blended successfully in a characteristic harmony. The outer form and the inner meaning of the object of the artist were knit together gracefully like body and mind. "The concise formula of knit like Word and Sense (*Vagarthav-iva-sampriktab*) represents the ideal of harmony and synthesis achieved in this period in many spheres of thought and life, and not the least in the domain of art." There is, then, no wonder if scholars and art-critics conclude that *the Gupta art represents ancient art at its best.* The honourable and praiseworthy position which the Gupta art occupied in India infused it with such great power, prestige and glory as enabled it to mould the art traditions of the greater part of Asia for centuries together. Transplanted in new environs beyond the boundaries of India, the Gupta art brought into existence the cultural empire of Greater India. The conventions of fresco painting of Ajanta especially found a congenial home in Central Asia and China and were received with great enthusiasm by the people of foreign races which always looked for inspiration to India in matters of religion, literature, art and culture.

[1] *Ancient India* by R. C. Majumdar, p. 490.

Chapter 9

India and the Western World

FOR a period of about a thousand years—from the invasion of Darius to the sack of Rome by the Goths—India was in more or less constant communication with the West. This naturally raises the question—had this long intercourse of nearly ten centuries any influence upon the development of the art, literature or thought of either India or of the Greeco-Roman world ?

From remote antiquity India had cultural relations and commercial intercourse with western countries by land and sea. "There is enough evidence for drawing conclusion that the Indus valley people in the third millennium B. C. had trade-relations with Sumer and other renowned centres of culture in western Asia and probably Egypt and Crete. In the Old Testament we have references to trade between India and Syrian coast as far back as 1400 B. C. Archaeological evidence reveals to us that in the 8th century B: C. India carried on trade both by land and sea with Mesopotamia, Arabia, Phoenica and Egypt. From the 4th century B.C. specially under the Mauryas commercial and maritime activities made considerable progress and definite land and sea-routes were opened for the purpose "The overland route passed through Khyber to the upper Kabul Valley, and thence across the Hindukush to Balkh, which stood on the great highway linking the East and the West. There were several routes from Balkh both towards Central Asia and China on the east and to the Mediterranean and Black Sea on the west. One of the western routes went down the Oxus river

to the Caspian and wares then were carried, partly by land and partly by river, to the Black Sea ports. The other skirted the Karmanian desert to the north and having passed through the 'Caspian Gates' reached Antioch by way of Ctesiphon and Hekatompylos.''

The sea-routes from the mouth of the river Indus lay along the coast to the mouth of the Euphrates river. Then ships either sailed up the Euphrates and reached the land route at the point where it crossed that river ; or they continued their coastal voyage along the shores of Arabia and sailing through the Red Sea reached its head near the Suez. From this point goods were carried by land to Egypt on the west and to famous ports like Tyre and Sidon on the north and from thence to the mediterranean ports. Merchandise often changed hands at important commercial centres, towns and harbours. Whenever direct sea-voyage was made the sailors had to keep close to the coast to avoid the perils of the deep. Later on, the great discovery, made by Hippalus about 45 A. D. 'of the existence of the monsoon winds, blowing regularly across the Indian Ocean' enabled the ships to sail straight across the Indian Ocean and thus reach the Indian ports soon. 'From Okelis, the port at the mouth of the Red Sea, the monsoon winds would carry ship in forty days or even less to Muziris (modern Granganore on the Malabar Coast). Thus Alexandria was now less than three months journey from the Indian coast. Henceforth the ships from southern India could easily avoid the long coastal voyage.' The importance of this route lies in the fact that it linked India not only to the gold fields and the fabulously wealthy incense country of southern Arabia and Somaliland but to Egypt and Judaea.

As a result of these trade routes there was a considerable sea-borne trade between India and the western countries as far as the African coast before the Christian era and articles of commerce bearing their Indian names reached the western world from time to time. Indian ivory became widely known in the Mediterranean at an early date and so was rice brought from the southern ports of India by Arab traders and Indian spices were carried on camel. We are told that there were

Indian women, Indian hunting dogs, Indian cows etc. in the procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 B. C.), the Greek ruler of Egypt. His yacht had a saloon lined with Indian stones.[1] Similarly we have references to imported Greek girls, Guard of Yavana (Greek) women and a bodyguard of dumb Mlecchas in southern India.[2] Greek were thus employed in India as mercenaries. Whether India was affected in the pre-historic period by her contact with her nearer and more powerful neighbours, the Assyrians and Babylonians, is an interesting question. Prof. H. G. Rawlinson stated[3] that the *Brahmi* script, the parent script of India, was borrowed from Semitic sources about the seventh century B.C. ; the Fish Incarnation of Vishnu is reminiscent of the Babylonian stories of flood ; the conception of *Nakshatras* and the division of the week into seven days and naming them after the sun, the moon and five planets was borrowed from Chaldaean astronomy, Alexandria,[4] and in architecture India borrowed details of ornamentation such as the bell-capital and the lion-pillar, indirectly from Assyria through Persia. These statements, it seems, are biased and open to question.

The Persian Period and its influence. In 538 B. C. the last of the great Semitic Empires of Western Asia came to an end and Cyrus of Persia founded the great Persian Empire. His successor Darius in 510 B. C. advanced upon India from Baktra and, reaching the river Indus at the town of Kaspapyrus, a frontier city of Gandhra, sent an expedition under a Greek mercenary named Skylax to explore the Indus down to its mouth. To Skylax belongs the double distinction of having been the first Greek to visit India to make the Red Sea Voyage. As a result of this Darius annexed the Indus Valley and made it the twentieth province of the Persian Empire. The new province paid to the Great King the enormous annual tribute of 360

[1] *Ancient India* by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, p. 222.

[2] *Early History of India* by V. Smith, p. 400 ; *The Tamils a Hundred ears Ago* by Pillay, Chapter III.

[3] *Intercourse between India and the Western World* by Prof. H. G. Rawlinson, pp. 14-15.

[4] *Antiquities of India* by Barnett, Chapter VI, Note.

talents of gold dust (£ 1,078,272) and supplied a light division to the Persian forces. With the gradual break-up of the Persian Empire, the practical independence of eastern Iran, and the war with Greece, the traffic between India and the West sank to practically nothing and the province of the Punjab, in due course, had shaken off its allegiance to the Persian King. But the Persian Empire made a profound impression upon the Indian mind. According to some scholars India's contact with Persia for nearly two centuries influenced Indian culture.[1] The kharoshthi script, introduced by the Persians in their official documents, remained in use on the North-West Frontier till the fourth century A. D. The remains of Persian and Babylonian customs at Taxila as observed by the Greeks may point to this place as the capital of the Indian province under the Persian Empire. The Maurya Emperors, as shown by Megasthenes, lived in Persian style. They, like the Persian monarch, lived in seclusion surrounded by guards and only appearing at rare intervals or religious festivals. Chandragupta Maurya adopted the Persian custom of "hair-washing festival *Tykta*". The Buddhist architecture of Asoka, particularly the Asokan pillars and the style of their architecture, shows some traces of Persian influence. The lion capitals of the Asokan pillars are Persian in style with considerable modification. Persia suggested to Mauryan artists the use of stone instead of wood, brick and stucco. Asoka's plan of propagating the *dharma* by means of inscription upon the face of the rock may have been borrowed for similar practices in vogue among the Persians, for instance the Behistun inscriptions of Darius. Even the Royal Road running through the Mauryan domains finds its parallel in Persia. Some writers still go further and suggest that the Mauryas borrowed the idea of an empire from the Persians. Certainly this is going too far. Havell rightly points out that the resemblances between the Persian and the Indian cultures were due to common traditions and that none imitated the other.

The Greek Period and the Hellenic influence. With the break up of the Persian Empire and the invasion of Alexander

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1 *Intercourse between India and the Western World* by Prof. H. G. Rawlinson, Chapter II, 'The Persian Period', pp. 16-29.

and the subsequent rule of the Greeks in the Punjab and the frontier provinces of India, a new epoch in the history of India's intercourse with the western world was ushered in. (For details refer to Chapter VI and "Indo-Greek Rule" in Chapter VII). The Greeks, long before the annexation of the Punjab by Persia, appear to have heard, in a dim sort of way, of India. Herodotus, born in 485 B. C., was the first Greek who wrote a graphic, careful and accurate account of India. The next Greek to write about India was Ktesias who was for twenty years in the Persian court which he left in 398 B.C. Statements and remarks of Ktesias did not possess sobriety, accuracy and truth like those of Herodotus and so Ktesias is responsible for most of the grotesque legends about India which fill the pages of classical and medieval writers to the days of Sir John Mandeville. Greece borrowed her first knowledge of India from the Persians who ruled over Indian frontier provinces and indirectly from Egypt with which India traded. To the Persian thus Greece owes her first knowledge of India. Then came Alexander's invasion in 326 B. C. Before this event the intercourse between India and Greece was through Persian and Phoenician caravans. Greece had no direct communication with India. Whatever she knew of India, she had learnt from Greek officials in Persian service like Skylax, Ktesias, etc. But Alexander's invasion established close contact between East and West—more precisely between India and Greece. Besides considerable bodies of Greek settlers who remained behind Alexander in the Punjab, there was great Greek colony at Baktra, once capital of the Eastern Iran, on the highroad to India. After the break up of the Mauryan Empire, disturbances in Central Asia drove the Bactrian Greeks south of the Hindu-Kush where they established a kingdom with its capital at Sagala, afterwards splitting up into a series of petty principalities. The Greek principalities, after enjoying considerable power for nearly two centuries, were succeeded by Saka chiefs and finally by the Kushan tribe who quickly absorbed all the petty Greek States of the Punjab and established a vast empire.

Now, the question is ; how far these Greeks influenced the Indian culture and civilisation ? It is difficult to determine

to what extent the Greek culture influenced Indian life and thought. The earlier view put too much stress on the effects of Alexander's invasion and the western scholars held that Indian civilisation owes a great debt to Greece. This appears to be a biased view. On the contrary, others have been minimising the influence of Hellenism on Indian culture and civilisation. Except a few traces of Greek influence on Indian coins and Gandhara School of Sculpture, Indian culture remained uninfluenced. A critical examination of Hellenistic influence upon the various phases of Indian civilisation and culture shows that Greek or Hellenic influence on Indian civilisation was slight and superficial. On the other hand, Greek thought, particularly the domain of philosophy, owes much to India.

The invasions of Alexander, Seleukus and Antiochos were of little consequence as they left no permanent marks on the life and culture of the Indians. Magasthenes' description shows that the Indian culture remained unadulterated. But embassies were exchanged with the Hellenic powers by the Mauryan Emperors of Magadha. Syrian and Mauryan monarchs continued for several generations to maintain a close and friendly relations. Seleukus sent Megasthenes to Chandragupta, and Deimachus to Bindusara, son and successor of Chandragupta and Ptolemy Philadelphus sent Dionysius to the Mauryan court.[1] Indian philosophers, traders and adventurers were to be found in the intellectual circles of Athens and in the markets of Alexandria. During the reign of Asoka Alexandria possessed a colony of Indian merchants, while the Alexandrians had created their own settlement in South India on the Malabar coast. The first of the Mauryas, Chandragupta, had entered into a marriage contract with a Greek potentate and corresponded with the Syrian monarch. His son Bindusara asked a Greek king Seleukus for a sample of Greek wine, some raisins and the services of a Greek sophist. Seleukus wrote back saying that he sent the wine with much pleasure, but regretted that it was not good form among the Greeks to trade in philosophers.[2] When Asoka was

[1] *Strabo*, Edited by Meineke, II, 1, 10 ; *Natural History* by Pliny, VI, 17, 3.
[2] *Frag. Hist. Greece* by Muller, IV, 421.

converted to Buddhism, he despatched missionaries to his friends, the Greek monarchs of Egypt, Syria and Macedonia so that they might share in the glad tidings of his new creed. Later on Asoka entrusted the government of a wealthy province, Saurashtra, and the execution of important irrigation works there to a Yavana chief. Inspite of all this Indians did not ape the Greeks. Their art, architecture and literature bore no traces of Greek influence so far.

If any Greek influence affected Indian life, it was when Indo-Greek kingdoms were founded in the north-west of India. It was during this period that the two cultures came in close contact and affected each other. But still there is no evidence that the Greek culture affected the Indians appreciably. There might have been some influence of Hellenistic polytheism on the development of the Mahayan cult of Buddhism, but the Indians neither adopted Greek faiths nor worshipped Greek deities. "The tendency was for Indo-Greek and other foreign princes and people to become Hinduised rather than for Indian princes and people to become Hellenised." The Bactrian Greeks very largely adopted Hinduism, the religion of their neighbours. The conversion of Menander to Buddhism is as dramatic as that of Asoka. In the Nasik caves is a *lena* owned by "*Indragnidatta* a Yonaka from Dattamitra (Demetra) in the north." In the Karala caves are several votive offerings from Greeks. Yavans or Greeks bearing Indian titles were donating liberally for the Buddhist caves of Karle and Nasik.[1] Then there is the Garuda pillar from Besnagar, Bhilsa in Madhya Bharat, with an inscription that it is the work of "Heliodorus son of Dion, a Greek envoy from Takshila, sent by the Maharaja Antalkidas." These point out that the Greeks in the Punjab and Western India rapidly embraced Hinduism and even took Hindu names.

Let us now take up the various aspects of Indian culture and see whether they bear any marks of Greek influence.

Art. Though Indian architecture was uninfluenced by the Greek architecture, the Indian sculpture in the frontier provinces

Bombay Gazette, XVIII, Inscription No. 7 and 10.

during the rule of the Kushans was considerably influenced by the Greek art.[1] The forms of Greek art were applied to Buddhist subjects with considerable artistic success in many cases. The images of Buddha appeared in the likeness of Apollo and the Yaksha Kubera is posed in the fashion of the Phedian Zeus. Consequently, a new school known as the Gandhara School of Sculpture arose. It has been already dealt with in Chapter VII.

As regards the Gupta Art Smith remarks : "The influence of Greek taste on the sculpture of the Gupta Age, although necessarily less obvious, is not less certain." According to him, although the works are truly Indian in the Gupta period, they form a charming combination of East and West. Another scholar, however, says that whatever influence Hellenism had exercised on Indian art, was practically exhausted by 400 A. D. After that date the traces of Hellenistic ideas have been too trifling to be worth mentioning. Hellenic and Indian conceptions of art differed fundamentally and it was for this reason, as explained by Marshall, that Hellenistic art never took a real and lasting hold upon India.

Coinage. In the Mauryan period coinage continued to be purely Indian or at any rate Asiatic in character. Asoka did not care to imitate the beautiful Bactrian issues, and he was content to use the primitive rudely struck coins which formed the currency of India before his time. The Indian coins were usually punch-marked. The idea of striking coins with two dies, obverse and reverse, one side bearing the effigy and titles of the king and the other side having some other device, was gradually adopted by Indian princes in imitation of the issues minted by dynasties of foreign origin—Greeks, Sakas, Parthians,

H. G. Rawlinson holds the opinion that the Kushan sovereigns imported a large number of Greek sculptors from Asia Minor to decorate the Buddhist *Vihars*, *Stupas* and other religious buildings which were constructed all over the Peshawar district after Kanishka's conversion to Buddhism. These sculptors settled down in the Punjab and their work gave rise to the Gandhara School of Art. But Sir John Marshall traces the Gandhara sculptures to the workmanship of Bactrian Greeks. (*Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, 1909, p. 1060)

Yuch-chi and the rest. Indian artists, who attained brilliant success in other fields, never cared much about die-cutting, and consequently never produced really fine polished coins.

The coins of Kanishka do betray Greek influence. In fact, they exhibit a strange medlay of Greek, Indian and Iranian deities. They bear traces of imitation of both Bactrian and Roman models, but they also show a great deal of artistic originality and power of realistic portraiture. Later on the Saka, Indo-Parthian and Kshaharata sovereigns issued coins which were more or less a compromise between Greeco-Roman and Oriental ideas ; but the coins of Nahapana were a clever imitation of the Greek style applied to realistic portraiture.[1]

In the Gupta period the best Indian coins were struck according to some scholars under the influence of western models. But they do not bear comparison with the magnificen dies of the earlier Bactrian kings. However, the Guptas introduced many coins of original artistic types, novel in conception and fine execution bearing no traces of foreign influence ; for example the Tiger-slayer type, the Lion-slayer type and the Asvamedha type of coins.

Philosophy. In the realm of philosophy the Greeks owe a huge debt to India. The mystical philosophy of Orphic and Pythagorean schools borrowed a good deal from the Indian beliefs. There are many points of resemblance between them. The Greek belief in re-incarnation and the doctrine of Karma (appearing in the closing episode of Plato's *Republic*), and Pythagorean "tabus" on wine, aninmal food, etc., have been taken from the Indian philosophy. The Indian philosophy, according to Rawlinson, influenced the Greek philosophy through Egypt. The Greeks adopted the Indian doctrine of Yoga or meditation to free the soul from body, abstinence from flesh and the Indian ideas of ascetism. The Neoplatonic School of Alexandria and Gnoslicism show traces of Hindu influence. Indian ideas of monasticism had considerably influenced both Paul of Alexandria and his disciple St. Anthony who expired in 356 A. D.

Language and script. The influence of Hellenism on Indian

Antiquities of India by Barnett, Vol II.

language and script is insignificant. No inscription in the Greek language has as yet been discovered in India or Afghanistan. Probably a corrupt Greek language was spoken among those Greeks who had settled in the Punjab and were being rapidly absorbed by the surrounding population and perhaps this corrupt Greek was the *lingua franca* of the Greek, Indo-Parthians and Saka tribes for some time. But the Indians neither used the Greek names nor the Greek language. However, the Kushans used for their own legends the Khotanese language, which resembled much the Saka tongue, although they engraved it in the form of Greek characters.

Drama. It is believed chiefly by Weber, Windisch and Schroder that the Indian drama was influenced by the Greek and we are indebted to Greek dramas for the idea of the screen, the parasite and the clown. The Indian drama like the Greek avoids the portrayal of violent or unseemingly action. But many arguments have been levelled against this view, specially by Sylvain Levi and Rapson. H. G. Rawlinson rightly observes that 'the Indian drama, with its neglect of the unities, its mixture of prose and verse, comedy and tragedy, resembles the severe Greek tragedy as little as a florid Indian temple resembles the Parthenon.' The art of play-writing in India in fact is absolutely native. "The resemblances are so few and superficial, and the differences so many and fundamental, that the theory has been generally discarded." However, in literature we may say that the Greeks borrowed their folk-lore from the Indians. The Greeks have taken many animal stories from the *Panchatantra.*

Astronomy, Mathematics and Medicine. The influence of Greek writers on Astronomy may be traced in the works of Indian authors who quote Yavanesvara or Yavancharya with respect. The Indians learnt astronomy from the Greeks and this is openly admitted. "The Yavans are brabarians. Yet the science of astronomy originated with them and for this reason they must be reverenced like gods." (*Gargi Samhita*) Greek names are used in Indian books on Astronomy.[1] Greek influence

[1] For details see *Intercourse between India and the Western World* by H.G. Rawlinson, Chapter VIII, p. 173.

can also be traced to some extent in Indian work on mathematics. The *Charak-Shastra*, the work on the Indian medicine, is supposed to betray Greek influence (the theory of three humours), but there is no strong evidence to support this contention. The Hindus do not appear to have derived their knowledge of Medicine from any of their neighbours, far less from the Greeks. About the elementary theories of Physiology the Hindus and Greeks are in accord, although it is uncertain whether these common ideas were developed independently.

On the whole, we can conclude that Greek rule in India was all through fighting for its existence and therefore could not have time or energy left for the development of art, science and literature and as such could not be influenced considerably by India. On the other hand, though a few aspects of Indian culture betray Greek influence, the Hellenic institutions and culture were never allowed to triumph over indigenous institutions and culture.

India and the Roman Empire.[1] The establishment of the Roman Empire in Europe in the first century before Christ gave a great impetus to the Indian trade. The *Pax Romana* secured the trade routes and the articles of luxury from India were in great demand in Rome. Fine muslins, jewels, especially beryls and pearls, drugs, spices and condiments were greatly demanded from India. The volume of trade was, therefore, increased to an unprecedented extent. The sea-borne trade between India and Rome received great impetus in the reign of Emperor Claudius by Hippalaus' discovery in 45 A. D. of the existence of the monsoon winds, blowing regularly across the Indian Ocean. The epoch-making change has already been referred to in the beginning of this chapter. According to Pliny nearly £5,50,000 flowed every year from Rome to India to pay for the balance of trade. This statement is borne out by the huge hoards of Roman coins unearthed in Indian soil in Madras State. Palmyra, Alexandria and later on Adule, the chief port of Ethiopia on the African coast were the chief emporiums of active commerce between the Roman Empire and

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1 Refer to *The Commerce between the Roman Empire and India* by Warmington.

India. This trade between India and Rome continued to thrive steadily during the second and third centuries A. D. inspite of a temporary lull in the demand for luxuries after the extraordinary extravagance in the reign of Nero and some set-backs caused by wars. Apart from this, the oriental expeditions of the Roman Emperors in the third century A. D. brought them into close and sometimes almost direct contact with India.

One of the results of the increased intercourse between India and Rome was the appearance of several books on India and Indian geography by western writers of the age. Pliny, Strabo, Ptolemy, Clement of Alexandria, Philostratus, Callistratus, and Dio Cassius deserve mention in this connection. They give a more accurate knowledge of India in the western literature. Another result of the commercial intercourse between the two countries, India and Rome, was the increased political intercourse between the two. When Emperor Augustus finally came out triumphant from the civil war and established the Principate one or more, Indian sovereign states sent their embassies to him. Other Indian embassies also visited Rome during the first four centuries of the Christian era and no less than eight are expressly referred to as having been sent to Emperor Augustus in 26 B. C. Trajan (98-117 A.D.), Hadrian (117-138), Antoninus Pius (138-161), Heliogabalus (218-222), Aurelian (270-275), Constantine (323-353), and Julian (361-363). It seems two more Indian embassies were sent to Justinian in 530 and 552 A. D.

The commercial and political intercourse between the Roman Empire and India must have brought an increasingly larger number, both of Indian and Roman subjects, to visit each other's country. Alexandrian and Syrian traders frequently visited India. The first Alexandrian to visit India was Skythianus a contemporary of the Apostles (*Journal of Royal Asiatic Society*, XX, 267). In due course Romans had set up their colonies in southern India where they had acquired a greater intimacy with Indian customs than had been possible before. On the other hand, a large number of Indians visited Alexandria, which being in the central position, was the great meeting ground between the East and the West. Ptolemy and Dion

Cassius mention Indians in Alexandria. An interesting evidence of such visit, even in Ptolemaic days, is well preserved in an inscription on the temple of Dedesiya near the Nile river which contains 'Sophon', the name of an Indian.[1] Even as late as 470 A.D. some Brahmans from India visited Alexandria and they were lodged in the house of Consul Severus. This had the effect of developing Indian shipping considerably. The subsequent expansion in trade and frequency of voyage is marked by the rules for merchandise, shipping and products found in the Code of Manu. Later on, an interesting treatise on shipping, *Yuktikalpataru* of Bhoj Narapati, was written.

In 364 A.D. the first fatal step in the downfall of the Roman Empire had been taken when it was divided. In 410 came the Goths, and fifty years later the mightiest kingdom of Europe had ceased to exist. After this the Roman trade with India, though struggled on feebly till the 6th century A.D. dwindled rapidly.

The intimate, friendly and commercial intercourse between India and the western world naturally affected the culture of the both. It is difficult to estimate the scope and nature of their influence upon each other, but some of its aspects can be broadly mentioned. There is no doubt that Indian art and coinage were profoundly affected by that of the West. The influence of Roman astronomy on the progress of the science in India is also undeniable. *Romaka Siddhanta* is freely alluded to by Varahamihira and the *Paulisa Siddhanta* is based on the astronomical works of Paul of Alexandria (c. 378 A.D.). On the other hand, Indian medical science, astronomical terms and the system of numerals were adopted by Western countries. Some Indian books like *Panchatantra* were also very popular there and were translated in many languages.[2] Many Indian legends have found their way into Europe and may be found in the *Gasta Romanorum* and the *Decameron* and other medieval collections.

1 *Intercourse between India and the Western World* by H. G. Rawlinson, Chapter V, p. 99.

2 *A New History of the Indian People*, Vol. VI by R. C. Majumdar and A. S. Altekar.

The same reciprocal influence is observed in the realm of religion and philosophy. It is generally agreed that Indian philosophy exercised a great influence on the development of Neo-platonism. As noted above, its doctrines, abstinence from flesh, subjection of the body by asceticism, meditation to free soul from the body to attain union with the Supreme (the *Yoga* doctrine of Patanjali) and so on are derived from Indian sources. Plotinus, the Neoplatonist and Bardesanes and Basilidas, the Gnostic writers, all came to the East for instruction in philosophy.

The rise of Christianity affected Indian religion which had still some hold in the West. The Syrian writer Zenob gives us interesting information about the iconoclastic zeal of Christian missionaries which led to the destruction of two Hindu temples in the Canton of Taron (upper Euphrates, west of Lake Van). The temples were constructed by an Indian colony settled in that region in the second century B. C. About 304 A. D. St. Gregory attacked these temples and inspite of the heroic defence by the Indians broke, like Mahmud of Ghazni, two images of gods which were 12 and 15 cubits high.[1] St. Gregory must have been instrumental in wiping out to a large extent the trace of Indian religion in the West. 'But the fact remains that Indian religion, both Brahmanical and Buddhist, was still a living force in the region where Christianity arose and had its early field of activity.' There is no wonder, then, if Indian religion had the effect upon Christianity. The resemblance of the interior of the Christian Church to a Buddhist *Chaitya*, the extreme and extravagant forms of asceticism in early Christian sects, such as the Thebaid monasticism, metempsy-chosis, relic-worship and the use of the rosary might all have been borrowed by Christianity from Indian religious idea of Buddhism and Brahmanism. They are the eastern survivals. "The crozier, the mitre, the chasuble, the Cardinal's robe, the double choir at the Divine Office, the chants, the exorcism, the censor with five chains, the blessing imparted by extending the right hand over the heads of the faithful, the rosary, the celibacy of the clergy, their

Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, 1904, p. 309

separation from the world, the worship of saints, the fasts, processions, litamies and holy water of Christianity are the results of the contact with the Indian Buddhists."[1] It is also certain that several religious leaders of the West took the name of Buddha. Buddha was worshipped by the Christians under the name of Josaphat. The Jews practised monasticism—Buddhist ideas.

In view of the above facts, there is no shadow of doubt about the general influence of Indian ideas upon Christianity ; but it is more difficult to estimate the effect of Christianity on India. However, it may easily be accepted that Christian missionaries visited India from an early period and small Christian communities were established here. 'We have reference to the progress of Christian Church in South India, in the 'Nations of India', a pamphlet included in the *Romance History of Alexander* of the Pseudo-Kallisthenes (5th century) and in the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indikopleustes, a Christian monk who visited India in the first half of the sixth century A.D.'

Conclusion. The Hindu culture reached its high water mark under the Guptas. The Hindu religion then attained the form that is bequeathed to us even today. The Gupta administration, which perfected the imperial traditions, served as the ideal for contemporary and later states. Peace and prosperity, secured by the Gupta government, led to a rich and remarkable development of art, literature, philosophy and science. The Hindu culture continued to be evolved independently. The establishment of the Hindu colonies abroad spread Hindu culture and civilisation and considerably influenced the life and thought of other peoples. India did not lead an isolated life evolving its own culture in a stagnant pool but kept close contact not only with the East but with the civilisations of the West through trade and commerce. Such relations with West began much earlier continued to be fairly constant and active till the sixth century. But, in spite of this, western life and thought failed to impress deeply Indian culture and civilisation. Though some aspects of Indian culture do betray a few traces

[1] It is the view of Abbe Huc who visited Tibet in 1842.

of the Greeco-Roman culture's influence, yet the Indian culture continued to evolve so independently and effectively that whatever influence the Greeco-Roman culture exercised, had completely dwindled and disappeared by the fourth century A.D. On the other hand, the influence of the Indian culture continued on the western philosophy for centuries together and Christianity even today exhibits some traces of this influence.

Chapter 10

Hindu Cultural Expansion

Importance of the Hindu culture.[1] 'The culture of India has been one of the great civilising and humanising factors evolved by man.' For centuries together, the general spiritual life of the larger part of the continent of Asia 'meant mainly its response to the call of the eternal ideas discovered, systematised and humanised by the sages and saints of ancient India.' In other words culture in Asia has been a complex fabric of life, woven by several different strands, of which Indian is the most prominent. Undoubtedly, India was a civilising force in many backward countries of Asia. "India was the civilizer" from after the synthesis of Hindu culture about the beginning of the first millenium B. C. down to the closing centuries of the first millennium A. D. Because it was during this long period that there was the cultural unification of India, and it went on simultaneously with the cultural expansion of India into overseas countries like Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Indo-China, Malaya, Indonesia and to a large extent into the countries of North West like Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Turkistan in Central Asia. The transformation of the eastern countries like China, Korea and Japan was achieved through their close contact with the spiritual forces from India. Thus in moulding the Asian culture Indian share has been very significant. But India or more precisely the Hindu culture of India was not a civilising force merely. It brought to them intellectual awakening, social con-

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[1] See *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III, pp. 87-93.

sciousness and material prosperity. With many backward races of Asia, the sense of social order and organisation, arts and crafts seems to have dawned for the first time with the advent of the merchants and the Brahman and Buddhist missionaries from India. It not only brought material uplift to these backward peoples, but their dormant intellectual and other powers and talents were quickened to life and they were enabled to attain the fulfilment of those powers without any difficulty or hinderance. The Hindu culture thus helped other peoples to make their own contributions to world civilization, while it absorbed them and participated in the deeper and wider life. The Hindu culture brought to other nations their own spiritual ideas and values. 'In the case of an ancient and highly cultured people like the Chinese contact with Indian thought gave the finishing touch in the formation and in the highest expression of their culture. Buddhism which was carried to China by the Indians brought home the Chinese the necessity of going into the fundamental questions of existence and endeavour.' Java and Siam, China and Japan enjoyed richness of life and witnessed the astonishing efflorescence of their minds and spirits manifesting itself in literature, fine arts and religious ritual which contact with Indian culture brought about. Assimilation and unfoldment and not hinderance and suppression was the key-note of Hindu cultural expansion. Indian philosophy and culture went abroad not to destroy and ruin but to awaken and fulfil. It went there like the refreshing showers and life giving rain and not like the burning wind or the killing blight. Hence its achievement, unlike that of the western culture, is more than that of a mere force of material civilisation or civilised organisation.

Wherever the Indians went and settled they spread their own culture but at the same time were absorbing the native cultural trends. Consequently they evolved a new culture the keynote of which was Indian. Thus they created culture in other Asiatic countries the values of which were 'awareness of the unity of all life and a love for the ultimate and the universal in preference to the immediate and the particular.'

Causes and the Agencies for the Hindu cultural expansion.

1. It is true that cultures have been spreading in the wake of conquest and commerce. Undoubtedly the spread of Hindu culture in the Far East began through commercial relations between India and the countries of the Far East. Lucrative commerce and economic gains encouraged Indians to sail across the Indian Ocean, go to distant lands and suffer innumerable difficulties and dangers. Being situated in the Indian Ocean, India occupied central position and in ancient times was on the sea-routes to cultured and civilised countries of the world. Her geographical position enabled India to form a link between the East and the West. Consequently Indians undertook innumerable voyages for commerce. In ancient India Eastern countries like Java, Sumatra, Malaya were regarded as the veritable El dorado which constantly alluded enterprising traders by promising immense riches to them. This view is reflected in the name *Suvarndvipa* or *Suvarnbhumi* (Land of Gold) which was applied to this vast region of the Eastern countries.[1] The desire to acquire immense gold provided a potent stimulus to the Indians to sail to these countries. The uncivilised wild races came in close contact with these Indian merchants from whom they learnt the first lessons of culture.

2. Besides the enterprising merchants, the Buddhist missionaries and the Brahman teachers, the torch bearers of the Hindu culture, accompanied the Indian merchant community to the distant lands. They carried abroad the Indian thought and culture. But they did not go there as members of an alien ruling race with natural advantage by virtue of their superior position. Having no political power and administrative rights Indian missionaries used to mix amongst the wild and uncultured alien races and in face of overwhelming hinderances and great dangers used to deliver sermons to them and indirectly made them more cultured and civilised. Sometimes Indian saints and sages set up their hermitages in foreign lands which in due course became the significant centres of Indian culture and spread the Indian cultural trends like a radio station. Kaundinya and Agastya had such hermitages and Ashrams. Kaundinya's

Suvarndvipa by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Part I, p. 37.

name is revered in inscriptions as the founder of the Hindu royal families in greater India.

3. Besides these two agencies—Indian merchants and missionaries—many Indians who settled in foreign lands contributed substantially towards Hindu cultural expansion. They had established their own colonies. Naturally their cultural influence on the foreign peoples was very deep and far reaching.

4. Sometimes adventurous young Kshatriya princes sailed to the distant regions to seek their fortune and carve out new kingdoms for themselves. The history of Indo-china provides many examples of such Indian Kshatriya princes and persons of royal blood. Consequently Indians had established a large number of kingdoms in the eastern countries. They had offered their own valuable contribution towards the formation of Greater India. Thus, the principal agencies for the cultural expansion were merchants, missionaries, emigrants and Kshatriya princes and persons of royal families.

However, it should be noted that the Hindu culture did not spread in the wake of a world conquering king who carried at the head of his legions fire and sword, savage barbarities and innumerable sufferings. India neither enforced her culture aggressively nor made herself manifest to the outside world in the person of a world shaker and conquerer like Alexander, Caesar, Mahmud of Ghazni, Chengizkhan, Timur and Nadirshah. 'Her *digvijaya* or world conquest was the conquest of truth and law—the *dharma vijaya.*' Those who disseminated Hindu culture abroad were impelled by inner spriritual urge and conscious will to carry the message of ideal spiritual life into distant lands. Their yearning for the general welfare and salvation of all persons inspired them to settle down in inaccessible lands and sacrifice themselves for the realisation of the highest good and the conquest of piety. Herein lies the eternal glory of the Hindu culture. It built a unique empire—'an empire sharing not in a political life under a suzerain, but in a common cultural and spiritual life in a commonwealth of free peoples. The empire that India built overseas and overland was conquered by the piety and the spiritual energy.' The

guiding principle of this empire was *dharma* or religious culture and righteousness. Indian colonial empires differed fundamentally from those of the western nations. Though Indians had established their colonies in the South-East Asia, but they did not think it right to settle down their growing population there, nor they regarded these colonies as a profitable market for their expanding industries and increasing commerce. These colonies were never exploited anyway by the Indian emigrants or conquerors. Moreover, there is nothing to show that the Indian States derived any political advantage or economic gain from this extensive empire. It is even doubtful whether the colonial powers maintained any regular contact with the political powers in India, though the claims of Samudragupta that he exercised suzerainty over all the islands of the South-East Asia might have reference to some of them. But the most outstanding effect of the establishment of this overseas Hindu Empire was the spread of Hindu culture and civilisation in the distant regions. Let us now explain the political and cultural extension of this empire.[1]

Colonial and Cultural expansion

From time immemorial the people of India had been maintaining free and intimate intercourse with the outside world. Even in pre-historic age, the Neolithic people had relations with countries of the Far East, and they emigrated in large numbers, both by land and sea and settled in Indo-China and the Indian Archipelago. In succeeding ages, while a rich and prosperous civilisation of high degree flourished in the Indus valley, there was undoubtedly friendly and familiar intercourse with the countries of Western and Central Asia. Of the two important races that moulded to a great extent Indian culture and civilization the Aryans and Dravadians entered into India from outside and necessarily relations were established and maintained by them, at least for a few centuries, with the

For details refer to *Ancient Indian Colonies in Far East*, Vols. I and II ; *Hindu Colonies in the Far East* by Dr. R. C. Majumdar ; *Indian Cultural Influence in Cambodia* by B. R. Chatterji ; *Making of Greater India* by Quaritch Wales, H. G.; *Greater India* by Kalidas Nag.

countries where they had lived before the occupation of India. From very ancient times India had commercial relations both with the lands of the East and the West. The stories of the *Mahabharat*, the *Jatakas* and the *Katha Sarit Sagar* have references to Indian merchants sailing to the countries beyond the seas in search of gain. A Jatak story informs us how Indian merchants sailed to the land of Baveru (Babylon) with a varied cargo that included an Indian peacock. Other stories relate how Indian traders sailed to the regions stretching from Burma to Indonesia—called *Suvarnabhumi* (the land of gold). Thus India had trade relations with Babylon, Syria and Egypt in the most ancient periods. In the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era India had commercial and cultural relations with the countries of Central Asia in the north, Greek Kingdoms of the west and the islands of the Pacific in the east.[1] In the Mauryan period such relations became more definite compared to the past. The account of the *Periplus* and Pliny informs us that Indian merchants and missionaries sailed from such harbours as Barbarika, Barygaza, Muziris, Nelcynda, Bakari Korkai and Puhar. Later on for the commercial purpose Indians settled in some islands of the Arbian Sea and the island of Sacotra and the port of Alexandria had colonies of Indian merchants. When the Roman Empire came into existence Indians maintained political and commercial relations with the Romans. In the seventh century when the Arabs controlled land and sea-routes, India carried on active trade with the Arabs. Thus India's commercial relations with Babylonia, Syria, Egypt, Greece, Rome and Arabia left traces of Indian culture on the Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Arabian cultures. Because culture and civilisation follow in the wake of trade and commerce.

As noted above the Indian merchants, Buddhist and Brahman missionaries, adventurous Kshatriya princes and enterprising emigrants sailed from India and settled down in the countries and islands of South-East Asia. There they introduced Indian customs, manners, philosophy, religion, rituals, literature and fine arts. In due course they intermarried with the local peoples

[1] See for details *Western Asia, Egypt etc.* by Gauranganath Banerjee.

and Indianized them. "Indianized Kingdoms soon came into being, either as a result of an Indian imposing himself on the native population, or else through a native chief adopting foreign civilisation" (Indian). This process of Indianization commenced in the third century B. C. and continued till the 13th century A.D. It would, therefore, be not unreasonable to conclude that India had never led lonely and isolated life completely cut off from the rest of the world.[1]

The view that ancient Indians were a stay-at-home people, isolated from the rest of mankind by mountains and ocean barriers and leading a peaceful, quiet and unadventurous life within the boundaries of their own land, has been shattered now by the recent discoveries. Many remains of Indian culture in various parts of Asia have been brought to light. These indicate that Indians went beyond the seas and the mountains that gird her and established colonies. Indian art and literature reared its head abroad and Indian culture penetrated into some of the obscure corners of the world.

An account of the process of the Hindu cultural expansion is given below :—

Ceylon. According to Indian traditions Shri Ram was the first to carry the message of Indian culture to Ceylon. It seems that the Aryans were the first people to migrate from northern India and settle down in Ceylon and not the Dravids from Tamil land of the southern India. But historically India's relations with Ceylon can be traced back to the sixth century B.C. Ceylonese chronicles narrate now king Vijay of Bengal conquered and colonised Ceylon approximately 500 years before Christ. He married a local princess and became the progenitor of the Simhalese race and gave the island of Ceylon the name of Simhala. Some historians do not agree with this view. However, since then streams of immigrants from Bengal, Orissa, Bombay and Kathiawar flowed into Ceylon and Buddhism and Hinduism remained dominant there. The Aryans from the north and the Dravids from the south intermingled there. They brought with them social customs, religon, arts and crafts. In

1 *An Advanced History of India* by Dr. R. C. Majumdar and others, Chapter XV, p. 211.

the second century B. C. during the reign of Asoka his son Mahendra and daughter Samghamitra went to Ceylon as the Buddhist missionary. There they succeeded in making *Devanampriya* Tissa, the ruler of the island, a convert to Buddhism. Since then the people of Ceylon have continued to follow the Buddhist religion and remained under the cultural influence of India for a pretty long time. In due course Ceylonese Buddhist *Samghas* or orders of monks and nuns were set up and Buddhism became the official religion there. Old Buddhist relics from India found their way in Ceylon, a large number of the Buddhist stupas were erected, rock edicts in Asokan style were inscribed and a branch of the Bodhi-tree was transplanted in a Vihar at Anuradhapur. In the history of Buddhism Ceylon has special significance as the *Tripitak* of the oldest Buddhist sect *Sthavir*, written in the Pali, was available only there. It is said that Ceylon had retained the Buddhist religion and practices in their purest form in the Pali language and script. Buddhism in Ceylon brought into being great creative forces which manifested themselves through literature and fine arts. It is Buddhism which gave to Ceylonese the Brahmi script, Pali language, Indian architecture, sclupture and painting and introducing cultural unity among the diverse rival races organised them in sound social order. Later on other waves of Hindu cultural influence penetrated Ceylon and "the antiquities of Isurmuniya, Anuradhapura and Polonnaruwa reveal the Gupta influences, and the frescoes of Sigiria are clearly an extension of the Ajanta school."[1] Thus Ceylon is immensely indebted to India for religion, literature, philosophy and fine arts.

Central Asia.[2] In Central Asia India's cultural conquest completely overshadowed her trade relations. The expansion of the Mauryan Empire towards the north-west, the missionary activities of Asoka and the domination of Kushan kings over parts of Central Asia brought India into intimate contact with Central Asia. Here partly by the Buddhist missionary propoganda and partly by the political influence of the Kushans, the torch of Indian culture and civilisation was carried beyond

Ancient India by Dr. B.G. Gokhale, p. 223.
India and Central Asia by Niranjan Prasad Chakravarti.

the Pamirs into Turkistan and Mongolian regions of the nomadic peoples that settled in the vast region extending between the shores of the Caspian Sea and the Wall of China. Colonist Indians from Kashmir and north-western India also settled in large numbers in the region round modern Khotan. It was in Khotan that there existed the great Buddhist establishment of Gomati which was a centre of learning. Kashghar, Yarkand, Khotan and Kuchi were the significant centres of Buddhism. Flourishing Indian colonies once dotted the area which now lies buried under the sands of the desert of Gobi. According to the account of Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hien Indians were living in this region in the early centuries of the Christian era and by the fifth century A. D. the whole of Central Asia was completely Indianised. He informs us that the tribes living in the west of the Lake Lobnar had embraced Indian religions and used Indian languages. We have enough evidence to conclude that in the thirteen century A. D. Prakrit was the state language and the Kharosti was the official script in Khotan and othern southern colonies. The rulers of Kucha and other countries were Buddhists and had adopted Indian names Haripuspa, Suvarnpuspa, etc.

The archaeological explorations of Sir Aurel Stein in Central Asian region carried on in 1908 have laid bare the ruins of several cities peopled by the Indians 2000 years ago. Numerous Buddhist stupas, shrines and monasteries, images of Buddha, Ganesh, Kuber and other Brahmanical gods, coins with Indian legends, and many Buddhist canonical works and manuscripts and shorter records and documents written in Indian languages and Indian alphabets have been unearthed. These show the wide prevalance of Buddhism, Hinduism, the use of Sanskrit language, the extension of Gandhar School of Art, the fresco-painting of the Buddhist grottoes and the influence of the classical Indian art in sculpture. All this indicates the complete Indianisation of these out-of-the-way colonies and tells the tale of Indian adventures beyond the "Roof of the World". Even as late as the seventh century A. D. when Hiuen Tsang passed through Central Asia on his way to and back from India, he noted the dominance of Buddhism and Indian culture over that

wide area. Central Asia was the meeting place of the two great cultural traditions of India and China and it was this region which was responsible for receiving and spreading Indian religion, philosophy, literature and fine arts over a large area. Thus, before the rise of Islam in Central Asia Indian culture and civilisation predominated there and it is said that the Mongol leader Chengiz Khan was a Buddhist.

China[1], Korea and Japan

From Central Asia Indian culture spread to China, Korea and Japan. In China Indian culture was carried by Buddhism which travelled from Khotan to China in the first century A. D. and it remains a living faith even today among millions of Chinese. Credit goes to first two Indian missionaries Dharmaratna and Kasyapa Matanga for taking Buddhism with its sacred texts and relics to China. The Chinese emperor Ming-ti of the Han dynasty (56-76 A. D.) constructed the "White Horse" monastery for the residence of these two missionaries. It was the first Buddhist Vihar in China. Till 265 A. D. Buddhism spread slowly in China but it progressed with wonderful rapidity between the third century and the sixth century. The reign of T'ang dynasty (618-907) is the glorious and the golden age of Buddhism in China. It is difficult to determine precisely the influence which Buddhism and Indian culture exerted upon the ancient civilisation of China. She showed the proverbial zeal of a new convert. Streams of Chinese pilgrims visited India and bands of Chinese monks undertook the perilous journey to India to study at first hand the religious beliefs and practices of Indian Buddhists and to collect Buddhist manuscripts, relics and statues. Hundreds and thousands of Buddhist books and manuscripts were carried from India to China and then translated into the Chinese language. For this not only did the Chinese themselves learn Sanskrit and Pali, but they also invited many Indian scholars to go to China. Hundreds of Indian scholars and monks visited China, settled there and dedicated their lives to the sacred task. The most notable among them are Kumarjiva, Gunavar-

1. *India and China* by P. C. Bagchi.

man, Bodhi Dharma and Parmartha. Buddhism as interpreted by Indian scholars like Jingupta, Jinayasha, Dharmgupta, Jnyanabhadra and Bodhiruci quickly became 'a force to be reckoned within the intellectual and cultural life of China.' In short 'Buddhism built up the philosophical and metaphysical framework of Chinese thought' and was responsible to a great extent for such qualities of Chinese culture as spirituality, tenderness, compassion, philosophical serenity, delicacy of feeling etc.[1] A large number of Chinese Buddhist pilgrims—Fa Hien, Hiuen Tsang, Sung Yun, I-tsing, etc. came to India from time to time. The result was that many important works of Indian literature and philosophy were translated into the Chinese language and it is singular to observe that there are Chinese translations of Buddhist texts whose originals can no longer be traced in India. Indian Buddhist art of which many specimens were transported to China also profoundly influenced art in China. The stone sculptures and bas-relief of the Han period and its music and sciences betray Indian influence. Like Indian *Stupa* Chinese constructed the pagodas. The renowned artist Nandlal Bose revealed to us that the figures engraved in the famous Pagoda in Ki-Fong are those of the Bengalis. Inscriptions written in Bengali letters have been discovered in a temple in Peking. The art of Tun-huang, where one thousand Buddhist caves are situated, bears testimony to the influence of Indian art. The rock-cut images in the Yun Kang gorge at T'atung-fu in Shansi and at Lung Men in Honan show clearly the influence of their Gupta and Gandhara prototypes. The Chinese pagodas seem to have been a development of the celebrated relic tower of Kanishka at Peshawar so greatly admired by the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims. Similarly the music and sciences of China have traces of Indian influence. China has encouraged the study of Indian mathematics and astronomy. Many Indian medicinal drugs were also utilised there. Dr. Gokhale remarks that 'Sanskrit language and literature exerted great beneficial influences on the growth of the Chinese language as can be seen from the *Tonal-Samdhi* in the Chinese

Ancient India by Dr. B. G. Gokhale, pp. 233-234.

and the large number of philosophical works in the language inspired by Buddhist devotion.' In addition to this, close contact established by religion, political and commercial relations between India and China and the existence of a fairly regular traffic by way of the sea are also to be noted.

From China Buddhism spread to Korea and from Korea to Japan in the sixth century. There it is still a living force and has moulded their civilisation during the last fifteen hundred years. In fact Japan was the farthest outpost of Indian culture in the East. In the thirteenth century the Mongol emperors embraced Buddhism in Mangolia and Siberia.

Afghanistan.[1] Afghanistan used to be a part of India in early times. It was included in Mauryan and Kushan empires. Being situated on the borders of India the ancient Indian culture extended there far and wide. Consequently there had developed famous centres of Indian culture like Bamiyan and Rudda. Bamiyan possesses, within the folds of its hills, innumerable remains of once extensive Buddhist art. There existed many Buddhist monasteries in Afghanistan. They were centres of Indian learning and culture exercising beneficial influences on the lives of millions of people. It is not surprising, therefore, to find such remains of Indian culture as stupa, vihar, images, etc. in Afghanistan. The period in which Fa-Hien and Hiuen T-sang visited India, Afghanistan enjoyed the blessings of Buddhism and before the invasion of Subuktagin during the medieval period Hinduism was predominating in the valley of Kabul. According to Albaruni Buddhism was prevailing in Iran, Khurasan, Syria and Iraq before the rise of Islam.

Nepal. It is a kingdom along the southern slopes of the Himalayas extending for about 500 miles from Almora district on the west to Darjeeling hills on the east. In the middle of the third century B. C. Asoka exercised suzerainty over it and it is said that he had gone there with his daughter Charumati and son-in-law Devapal Khattiya (Kshatriya) and there he constructed many stupas and vihars. Probably Buddhism entered Nepal in the reign of Asoka. Emperor Samudragupta exercised

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1 Refer to *Ancient Indian Culture in Afghanistan* by U.N. Ghosal.

his sway over Nepal which paid regular tribute to him. In the closing years of the sixth century the Lichchhvi dynasty established its rule there. In the medieval ages owing to the incessent invasions of the Muslims many Brahmans and Rajputs fled to Nepal and sought shelter there. They had taken with them to Nepal Indian religion, philosophy, literature and art. When the Gurkhas had established their power in Nepal in 1768, they introduced Hinduism there. Before this Hinyan, Mahayan and Tantric Buddhism prevailed there. But in course of ages degeneration had set in and Buddhism was gradually strangulated by Hinduism. Consequently Hinduism dominates today in Nepal. Like religion, Nepal's literature, language, art, customs and traditions betray deep influence of Indian culture. There are many stupas, hundreds of temples and many different places of pilgrimage. The most famous and principal temple is that of Pashupatinath where lord Shiva is worshipped. The architecture and sculpture of Nepal's temples bear resemblance with those of India. There are magnificent stone temples having very high *Shikhars* (massive towers). Besides these, there are pagoda-like wooden temples the roofs of which are made of copper. In the medieval period the Pala art of Bengal entered Nepal and influenced its art. The social structure of Nepal reveals the influence of the Hindu caste system. Although Hindu culture overshadows life in Nepal, yet the influence of China and Tibet is also visible on the cultural life of Nepal.

Tibet. Buddhism with Indian culture penetrated into Tibet in the reign of the famous Strong-tstan Gampu, the founder of Lhasa, in 639. He married a Nepalese and a Chinese princess, they were ardent Buddhists and their influence converted him to the new faith and consequently he introduced Buddhism in Tibet. Along with the new religion he with the zeal of a new convert introduced Indian alphabets which were in use in Khotan and formed Tibetan grammar and thus was paved the way for a new culture and civilisation in Tibet. The first group of the Buddhist missionaries went to Tibet in 647 A. D. Later on a Kashmiri scholar Padma Sambhava went to Tibet in 747 A. D. and introduced there Tantrik Mahayan

Buddhism and afterwards it was transformed into Lamaism. Shant Rakshita, a Nalanda scholar, paid a visit to Tibet in the 9th century at the invitation of king Ti-song De-tsen who constructed a vihar for him. He was the first to initiate Tibetans into the Buddhist *Samgha* and translated many Buddhist scriptures in the Tibetan language. In the eleventh century Atisha, a leading scholar of Vikramshila University, visited Tibet. He became the patron-saint of Tibet. Tibetan Buddhists came to India in large numbers and the proximity of India enabled them to come into close and intimate contact with the home of Buddhism. In the eleventh century, the Pala emperors of Bengal helped towards the reforms of Buddhism in Tibet and there was a lively intercourse between Tibet and the Pala kingdom. Tibetan monks studied at the monasteries of Nalanda, Oddantapuri, Vikramshila and Jagddala and many Indian Buddhist monks visited Tibet. In 1028 Bengal's scholar Dipankarshrijnan toured Tibet and preached Vajrayan Buddhism. Hundreds of the sacred texts of Buddhism were translated into Tibetan language, of which two famous collections *Tanjur* and *Kanjur* still exist. The art of Tibet resembles Indian art and has excelled in the production of copper gilt statues of the numerous Mahayan gods and goddesses inlaid with turquoise and other precious stones. Thus Tibet absorbed through Buddhism many Indian cultural trends in the realm of religion, philosophy, literature and art. Tibetan religion, methods of worship, ceremonies, rituals, language, script, grammar, literature, arts, social customs and traditions show Indian origin. In its turn Tibet rendered great cultural service to India. Several Buddhist works that were lost in India after the Muslim invasions and destruction of Nalanda, Vikramshila and other Buddhist universities and monasteries, were preserved in their Tibetan translations in Tibetan monasteries. They throw a flood of light on the evolution of Buddhist religion, philosophy and traditions.

Kashmir. The state of Kashmir was also culturally important because it lay on the route between India and China. It formed the part of the Mauryan and Kushan empires and was afterwards for a time subject to China. Many Kashmiri monks

visited China and colonists went there in large numbers. It helped in the spread of Indian culture abroad.

Colonisation of Further India[1]

The colonising activities of the Hindus and their maritime adventure found their full scope in the south-east Asia. Across the bay of Bengal lay Indo-China and the islands of Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Bali and they were inhabited by primitive, uncultured, wild races and had almost a monopoly of the world's spice trade. These extensive fertile regions were also rich in minerals and consequently they soon drew the attention of the Indians. The eastern coast of India, from the mouth of the river Ganges to the Cape Comorin, was studded with many harbours. It was from these ports that Indians had sailed and developed important commercial relations with the Far East in the second century A. D. Indian literature including Buddhist texts has faithfully preserved the common traditions of the ancient times of such perilous voyages to unknown distant lands beyond the sea. As pointed above in the beginning of the Chapter the stories in the *Jatakas*, the *Kathasaritsagara* and other similar collections frequently refer to traders' voyages to *Suvarnabhumi*—the land of gold, which was a general designation of several lands in the Far East. Enterprising merchants and adventurers returned from these lands with immense riches. On the other hand many met with ship-wreck and there were also dangers, sufferings and miseries of various other kinds. Some stories relate how persons of royal blood and young Kshatriya princes, dispossessed of their hereditary kingdoms, sailed to *Suvarnabhumi* to carve out their own destiny. We have reasons to believe that to some such Kshatriya enterprise we owe the foundation of Indian political power in these far-off regions of the South-East Asia. Indian princes, merchants and adventurers founded settlements and established their political power and social and cultural institutions there. From the second century A. D. onward there are references to kingdoms and principalities ruled by persons with Indian names. Their religion, language, social customs and manners all were Indian.

[1] *An Advanced History of India* by R. C. Majumdar and others, pp. 214-217.

They may, therefore, be safely regarded as Indian colonial kingdoms. Indian religious thoughts and culture spread in these kingdoms and attained glorious height. Between the second and the fifth centuries A. D. such kingdoms were successfully set up in Malaya Peninsula, Cambodia, Annam and the islands of Sumatra, Java, Bali and Borneo. The Brahmanical religion, mainly Saivism, flourished in these kingdoms, though Buddhism specially Mahayan form was also followed by the people. The aborigines adopted the civilisation and culture of their masters (Indians) and there was a gradual fusion of the two distinct races. Hindu institutions, customs and manners were modified to some extent by close contact with these peoples, 'but still for nearly thousand years the essential features of the Hindu civilisation and culture were the dominant characteristic of society in these kingdoms.' This affected complete cultural conquest. Some of the splendid monuments of Indian art and culture which still remain there are undying testimony to the early Indian colonizing enterprise. At first Indians tried to establish colonies in the countries near home. Thus Burma, Siam, Ceylon and Indo-China were the earliest fields of their colonizing activities. An account of these is given below.

Burma. The history of the relations between India and Burma in the early period is obscure. Some of the south Indian Tamil kingdoms had trade relations with Burma across the Bay of Bengal. The people from Kalinga, both merchants and missionaries, established contact with the people of Burma and also made a few settlements near the coast. The rise and growth of Buddhism in Burma was due to two of Asoka's missionaries, Sona and Uttara ; but actually the apostle was Buddhaghosha, the famous Simhalese scholar, who went to Burma from Ceylon in 450 A. D. and established there the Hinayan form of Buddhism. Later on in the eleventh century the Chola king Rajendra I sailed over to Burma and conquered and annexed it. In the thirteenth century Ceylonese Buddhism and Pali scriptures were introduced in Burma. During all these centuries of close contact Indian thought and art influenced Burmese life. There is no wonder, therefore, if Buddhist and Hindu remains of the Gupta period are found at Thatun,

Pegu and Proma. Ruins of some stupas together with other objects were discovered in Proma lower Burma. One of these ruined stupas was 'a majestic structure rising from five superimposed terraces'. A manuscript written in a script bearing resemblance to the Kannada-Telugu script was also discovered in lower Burma. The kings of these regions were Indianised and they adopted Indian titles of Vikram and Varman. In the eleventh century the ruler of upper Burma had carried to his kingdom Buddhist religious ideas, monks and scriptures from lower Burma. White bell-shaped massive pagodas, temples, bells and gongs, charming Buddha images, carved works illustrating Buddhist legends, yellow robed monks—all these reveal to us that Indian culture had penetrated deep in Burmese life through Buddhism. Even today a large number of Burmese are Buddhists and their language, script and religious rites and ceremonies have deep impression of Indian culture.

Siam.[1] In the second or third century A.D. in the central region of Siam there arose an Indian kingdom named Dwaravati founded by the Mons. It became a flourishing Indian colony. In the course of time the whole of Siam was completely Indianised. Later on the Mahayan form of Buddhism from the neighbouring Hindu colony, Cambodia, made its way into Siam and it became the official religion. Hinayan form of Buddhism was carried there by the Ceylonese Buddhist Sangh. The Hindu and Buddhist religious literature and art considerably influenced the Siamese language, literature, art and social institutions. Siamese language which borrowed its script from India was deeply influenced by Pali. Many of the technical terms describing social and political ideals were absorbed bodily from Pali in Siamese language. Bronze Buddha images of Amravati style, Gupta figures from Ganges valley, remains of stupas, monasteries and the Buddhist doctrines written in Pallava script have been discovered in Siam. "The influence of Indian ceremonial in Siamese court life is very extensive, and even today the coronation of a Siamese prince can be performed only by a Brahman priest." (Dr. B. G. Gokhale) Many of the

The Indian Colony of Siam by P. Bose.

Hindu rites and *Sanskars*, fashions and festivals have become a part and parcel of Siamese customs and rituals. Even today they perform *Chudakarmasanskara* and observe *Dashahara* festival commemorating Ram's triumph over Ravan. Many of the episodes and elements of the two famous Hindu epics, the Ramayan and the Mahabharat, have been freely taken over in Siamese literature. In the realm of art Siamese borrowed the conception of the Buddhist temples and Buddhist images from India. They evolved the famous Siamese Buddha 'a slender figure with flame—crowned oval face wearing a strange all-pervasive smile and distinctive pagodas style often made of broken bit of Chinese porcelain.' The names and the titles of the kings, people and towns of Siam even today reveal traces of Hindu influence. They remained under the cultural influence of Indians till the sixteenth century A. D.

Indo-China

Champa. On the main land of Indo-China Hindus established two powerful colonial kingdoms—Champa and Kambuja. The former colony included south Annam and Cochin with Amravati as its capital and was founded probably in the second century A. D. This colony continued to flourish for a period of thirteen hundred years (150-1471) and served as all important half way house between the Indian and Chinese commercial and cultural relations. Among the early rulers of Champa Dharm Maharaj Shree Bhadra Varma (387-413) A.D. and his successor Changaraj are famous. Being a devotee of Shiva Bhadravarma constructed a Shiva temple at Myson. It became a national sanctuary. The Shiva Linga in the temple was named *Bhadreshwara* or *Bhadreswara swami.* Another king of Champa abdicated his throne and undertoook a pilgrimage in India. Indravarma III (911-972) was another famous ruler of Champa. He was well renowned for his mastery and deep study of six systems of Hindu philosophy, Buddhist philosophy, Panini's grammar and doctrines of Saivism. From the tenth century onwards the Annamites and the Mongols began to attack Champa. Some of its rulers such as Jay Parmesvaravarmadeva Isvarmurti (1050-1060), Rudravarma (1061-1069), Harivarman (1070-1081), Maharajadhiraja Shree

Jaya Indravarman (1163-1180), and Jaya Simhavarman (1257-1287) were great heroes and warriors. They fought bravely and defended their country successfully against the attacks of their western neighbours, the Kambujas, and the great Mongol chief the famous Kublai Khan. They had diplomatic relations with the Chinese. After a glorious existence of more than thirteen centuries, the power of this Hindu colony was broken by the repeated attacks of their neighbours, the Annamese who gradually conquered the whole of Champa and in the sixteenth century it was over-run by Mangolian hordes. There were many flourishing cities in the colony of Champa and the whole country was adorned with beautiful and highly original temples both Hindu and Buddhist. Two temple cities Mi-song and Dong-Duong in Champa are famous even today. The native people were completely Hinduised. They worshipped Hindu gods and goddesses among whom Shiva, his *Shakti* or power, his two sons *Ganesh* and *Skanda* were occupying predominant position. The object of Shiva worship was the *Linga*. One of the oldest of the *Lingas*, placed in the Bhadreswara temple in Myson, was held to be the national deity. Besides Shiva, Vishnu, Krishna, Buddha and other gods were also worshipped. As regards art, the people of Champa followed closely the Gupta art not only in subject-matter but in technique also. The complicated stone foliation, celestial dancer poised on one toe intent on pleasing the gods and a bronze statue of Buddha discovered amongst the ruins of Champa reveal unmistakable influence of Indian art on the Champa art. A large number of temples were constructed in the whole country. In fact, the Champa art had attained a high level of excellence in abundance of decoration and gorgeous ornamentations in temples, *toranas* or main entrances and pillars. Sanskrit inscriptions and documents, discovered there, indicate us that Indian language, sanskrit, must have been very popular. Probably it was official language. There was considerable literary activity. A Hindu society modelled on the orthodox Indian type developed in Champa. The Brahmans occupied a high place, but the rank of the Kshatriyas was hardly inferior to theirs. Though Brahmanism dominated, Buddhism also enjoyed the patronage

of several rulers. However, Brahmanism and Brahmanic culture flourished and saturated life in Champa.

Kambuja or Funan

Another Hindu kingdom named Kambuja was established in the south of Champa by the Hindus who made their way up Mekong river there before the Christian era. The Chinese named Kambuja as Funan. Ancient Kambuja roughly corresponded to modern Cambodia and Cochin-China. The natives called Khmers believed that an Indian *rishi* or sage was their ancestor; hence their country was called Kambuja or Cambodia. The origin of this kindgom is shrouded in mystery. While discussing its origin Dr. R. C. Majumdar explains that according to an old legend Kaundinya, probably a Brahman, landed there and he married Soma, a Naga princess, and founded the royal dynasty of Kambuja. It is said that he planted a spear which he obtained from Drona's son Asvatthama. Another version of the legend makes him a son of Adityavamsa, king of Indraprastha. In any case he seems to be a Hindu and one can trace the earliest Hindu kingdom in Kambuja to the first or second century A. D. The royal dynasty so established accepted Hindu rites and codes and became in fact Hindu. The natural resources of the country, its mineral wealth, its rich and fertile soil and its river systems were fully and freely developed by the hardy and industrious Indian colonists during the following three hundred years and in the eighth century the kingdom of Kambuja reached a stage of high cultural development and exercised suzerainty over several vassal states. In the ninth century Java-varma II became the famous king of Kumbuja. He shifted his capital to the Angkor region which later on acquired international fame for its architectural monuments. He also instituted the Tantrik cult of *Devaraja* worshipped in a temple on a mountain. It was a kind of Saivism. Indravarma (877-889), the grand son of Jayavarma II, claimed that rulers of China and Champa obeyed his commands. His successor Yasovarman (889-908) was one of the most remarkable kings of Kambuja. He was the founder of a new capital city Yashodharpur (later on known as Angkor Thom). He was not only a great conqueror but a versatile scholar and great builder. It

is said that he acquired proficiency in the art of music, dancing, architecture and script and mastered many *Shastras* and *Kavyas* and composed a commentary on Patanjali's *Mahabhashya.* Yasovarman established the institution of *Ashramas* (monastic establishments), homes of pious devotees who consecrated their lives to study and meditation. Adequate endowments were provided for their maintenance. Detailed and definite regulations were issued by the king for the maintenance and conduct of these *Ashramas*, modelled on the lines of Hindu hermitages or *tapovans.* Another famous and mighty monarch was Suryavarman II (1113-1145 A. D.) who earned undying fame by erecting the famous Angkor Vat, a veritable wonder of the world. But the Kingdom of Kambuja reached it greatest extent during the reign of Jayavarman VII who ascended the throne in 1181 A. D. He conquered Champa and a part of lower Burma, founded a new splendid capital city known as Angkor Thom, and established and maintained many religious institutions and several works of public utility. The kings of Kambuja sent ambassadors to both India and China. In the fifteenth century the Annamites from the east and the Thias (who had conquered and occupied Siam) from the west attacked continuously Kambuja and soon reduced this powerful kingdom to a petty principality. At last Ang Duong, the last king of Kambuja, placed himself under the French protection in 1854. Since then Kambuja became a French protectorate. But the people of Kambuja, being awakened to their political rights, are endeavouring to shake off this protectorate and regain their independence.

The kingdom of Kambuja which exercised its sway over distant and extensive countries for centuries rose to far greater power than Champa. Numerous Sanskrit inscriptions give us the detailed history of its kings and wonderful temples like Angkor Vat, those of Angkor Thom and a hundred others still tell the tale of their grandeur and magnificence.

Angkor Vat, a wonder of the world, is a shrine dedicated to Shiva built by king Suryavarman. It is the largest temple ever built by man. A ditch runs close to the boundary walls of the temple and surrounds it. The total length of the

ditch is two and a half miles. The temple stands on the top of a massive and extensive terraced structure and has several spires and towers. There are three terraces standing one above the other, the first is 800 feet long and 675 feet broad with a total running length of nearly 3000 feet. The second and the third measure less compared to the first one. These galleries or terraces are linked together by stairs and intervening open terraces. The innermost terrace is dominated by five tall domes, the central one rises to a height of more than 210 feet above the ground level. The Angkor Vat is a pyramid temple. The general plan of the temple, as noted above, consists of a wide ditch, "the two external enclosures, the approaches, the three concentric galleries, the central mass, the large tower in the centre, the smaller towers on the corners of the two inner galleries and three still smaller ones on the west entrance of the outer enclosure—twelve in all." Thus the temple combines magnitude and magnificence. The gorgeous decorative sculptures invest the temple with a peculiar magnificence. The decoration is treated as embroidery work and the ornament is everywhere, even at the most invisible corners. The temple walls and galleries are adorned with birds, flowers, dancing maidens and scenes from the *Ramayan*, the *Mahabharat* and the *Puranas*. Angkor Vat is an excellent example of the oldest art both architectural and sculptural as it was developed in these foreign countries by the master Indian builders. It brilliantly and most effectively reflects the religious devotion and artistic urge as it was felt by the Indianised people of Kambuja. Another famous temple of Kambuja was Ta Prahm. It was dedicated to the Buddhist divinity *Prajnaparamita* of Mahayan sect.

Angkor Thom is the modern name of the capital city of Yasodharapura, founded by king Yasovarman. The city was enclosed by a wall which was surrounded by a ditch. It was square in shape, each side measuring more than two miles, with the grand temple of Bayon in the centre, containing fifty towers. This temple is second in size to Angkor Vat. Everything in the city was conceived on a truly noble scale; "the city of Yasodharapura was one of the grandest cities in the

whole world in that age." It was a city full of grandeur and glory.

In Kambuja empire Hinduism specially Saivism was the predominant religion. It had almost become national religion, though Vaisnavism and Buddhism occasionally enjoyed royal patronage. Sanskrit became the official language. Several sanskrit inscriptions, discovered there, were composed in beautiful *Kavya* style. Indian religious texts, the Ramayan, the Mahabhrat and the Puranas were studied with keen interest. Indian books of medicine and Indian methods of treatment were very popular. It is said that a Kambuja king Rudra Varman had appointed two Indian physicians in his court. There were several *ashramas* founded and maintained by royal charity and private munificence. They formed a salient feature of the religious and social life in Kambuja and served there as radiating centres of Hindu culture and religion. In short the people of Kambuja had embraced Hindu religion, culture and civilization and accepted the political and social ideas and customs of the Hindus. They had given to the world the biggest temple of Angkor Vat which is the brightest testimony and the greatest monument of India's cultural conquest.

Malaya Archipelago

Hindu colonies also flourished in Java, Sumatra, Bali and Borneo (Malaya Archipelago) where the remains of Hindu culture have also been discovered in abundance. This region, called *Suvarnadvipa*, saw the rise and fall of two big Hindu empires. The first one was formed by the Sailendra dynasty in the fourth century A.D. It comprised the Malaya Peninsula and the whole of the archipelago including the islands of Sumatra, Java, Bali and Borneo. The Arab merchants who traded in these parts described in rapturous terms the power, wealth and magnificence of the grand monarchs who exercised supreme sway there and each styled himself as "*Maharaja*". The daily income of these *Sailendras* was supposed to be two hundred maunds of gold. The available evidences justify the assumption that there were many Hindu colonies in the Malaya Peninsula during the early centuries of the Christian era and

the 'region around the Bay of Bandon was a cradle of Further Eastern culture, inspired by waves of Indian influence.'

Shrivijay Empire of the Sailendras. Probably the Sailendras (Lord of the Mountains) sailed off from Kaling on the eastern coast of India. First they conquered south Burma and north Malaya and later on they established their sway over nearly the whole of *Suvarnadvipa* comprising Malaya Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Bali, Borneo and other islands of the East Indies. The Sailendras founded a town called *Shrivijay* in Sumatra. They made it their capital and hence their kingdom was called Shrivijay Empire. It was founded about the fourth century A.D. and reached the height of its glory in the eighth century. The Sailendras ruled in glory and magnificence till the eleventh century A.D. when Rajendra Chola, first a famous king of southern India, who possessed a splendid fleet invaded the dominions of the Sailendras several times. Though he conquered a large part of the Sailendra Empire, it was a very difficult task to maintain control over such distant oversea provinces. The Chola conquest was more spectacular than substantial and therefore after nearly a century the Sailendras succeeded in shaking off the Chola suzerainty. However, the Sailendras were considerably weakened and in the fourteenth century a new Hindu kingdom of Java eclipsed the Sailendra Empire and the Sailendras practically disappeared from the scene.

The Sailendra kings not only gave political unity to a large part of Indonesia, but their liberal patronage and munificence developed its culture and gave it a new shape. The Sailendras were followers of Mahayan Buddhism which received a new vigour under them. They derived their religious inspiration from Bengal which was then the principal flourishing centre of Mahayan Buddhism in India. Kumaraghosha, who was a Buddhist monk of Bengal, became the *guru* or preceptor of the Sailendras. About the middle of the ninth century a Shailendra king Balaputradeva built a monastery at Nalanda and a Pala king named Devapal granted five villages for its upkeep. Another Sailendra king Shri Maravijayattunga Varman built a Buddhist Vihar at Negapatam for the maintenance of which the Chola king granted a village in the first quarter of

the eleventh century. It was due to Sailendras' patronage that art developed so highly that it produced such splendid monuments as Chandi Kalasan and Barabudur in Java. In fact the Sailendras were great builders and the famous Stupas of Barabudur stands even today as the living monument of their splendour. It was constructed during 750-850 A. D. on a hill in central Java. The whole edifice of Barabudur consists of nine successive stone terraces, each of rising height and diminishing size. The centre of the top-most terrace is crowned by a simple bell-shaped Stupa. Six of the nine tarraces are square while the upper three are circular. The five lower terraces have balustrades and galleries. Each balustrade consists of a row of arched nitches having images of Dhyani Buddha within. There are more than 432 of such images in the whole building. The upper terraces have a circle of stupas each of which contains a Buddha image set in a perforated frame work. A stair-case, with a gate way in the middle of each side of the gallery, leads to the next higher one. These galleries have eleven series of 1500 sculptured panels showing scenes from the lives of the Buddha in his various past incarnations and other stories from the *Avadanas* and the *Lalitavistra*. These images and sculptures are the finest examples of Indo-Javanese art and display the highest skill and workmanship of the master artists. Fine modelling, masterly planning, refined elegance of features, excellent grace, attractive pose, close-fitting, smooth robe, and a noble divine spiritual expression on face are the salient characteristics of the images of Barabudur. They resemble the Gupta figures and therefore it is certain that the Javanese art was derived from the art of the Gupta Age in India. Though Barabudur resembles more a pyramid rather than a Stupa, yet it is Indian both in conception and architectural form. To sum up, Barabudur is the finest manifestation of Indo-Javanese art.

Java. Hindu colonies were established in Java. According to the traditions and legends of Java colonisation in the country was attributed to Indian sages like Parashar, Vyas, Panduete etc. But Java appears to have been colonised in the first century of the Christian era and the first wave of colonists went from Kaling. Javanese chronicles record that 20,000

Indian families migrated there in the second century A. D. By the beginning of the second century a Hindu kingdom was established there and its king Dava-Varman sent an embassy to China in 132 A. D. Fa-Hien, the great Chinese pilgrim who was in India between 399 to 414 A. D., returned to China by the sea route and stayed in Java for five months. He described the country as a stronghold of Brahmanical religion. Four Sanskrit inscriptions, discovered there, record that a king named Purnavarman ruled in the region of the western Java about the fifth century A. D. These inscriptions exhibit that the Hindu culture was predominant in Java. Two or three centuries later Sanjaya founded a powerful Indianised kingdom in central Java. As its capital was at Mataram it was styled as the kingdom of Mataram. But it soon came under the sway of the Sailendras. Java formed a part of the Sailendra Empire till the ninth century A. D. when it recovered its independence. Now the central political authority and gravity shifted to eastern Java. Several powerful kingdoms rose to power in eastern Java. The most important among them were the kingdoms of Kadiri and Singhasari. In the eleventh century Airalangga became the most celebrated king of this region. Towards the close of the thirteenth century a new royal dynasty was founded by king Vijay with Majapahit as its capital. The kingdom of Majapahit conquered the surrounding islands and by 1365 the empire of Majapahit included nearly the whole of the Malaya Peninsula and the Malaya Archipelago. Its most important and renowned king was Rajasanagara (1350-1389). Early in the fifteenth century a fugitive Hindu chief of Java founded the kingdom of Malacca which soon rose to be a great political power and important commercial centre. But the conversion of its second king to Islam with some members of his royal family made Java a stronghold of Islam gradually. The aggressive attitude of Islam forced the last Hindu ruler of Java to take refuge with his followers in the neighbouring island of Bali.

Indian art and literature flourished in Java to an extent unknown elsewhere. There are still hundreds of ruined temples both Buddhist and Hindus. There is the famous Hindu temple of Lara-Jongrang in Central Java. It consists of eight principal

temples, three in each line with two between them. They are surrounded by a wall. There are three rows of smaller temples round the wall. All these temples number 156. The biggest and most famous temple is in the centre of the western row of the three chief temples. An image of Shiva is installed there. Another main temple to the north contains Vishnu image while that to the south Brahma image. There are series of relief-sculptures in these temples. They depict the episodes from the lives of Rama and Krishna. These sculptures are the Brahmanical counterpart of the Buddhist reliefs on Barabudur. The sculptures of Lara-Jongrang are dramatic, dynamic and vital, while those of Barabudur passive, static and less naturalistic ; the former represent the romantic phases of the Indo-Javanese art, whereas the latter the classic phases.

An extensive literature in manuscripts based on Sanskrit is discovered there. The epics of the Ramayan and the Mahabharat were most popular in that island, and even to-day provide the theme of their popular shadow-play, Wayang, and theatrical performance. Javanese dances, dramas and puppet plays are modelled on the Indian themes and epic material. The poetry and prose works of the Javanese language were immensely influenced by the rules of prosody and literary traditions of India. In fact India exercised its many sided influence in Java. The king of Malaya Peninsula and Indonesia bore Indian names. Their court customs and manners reflect Indian patterns. Their law codes were modelled on the Indian legal system. Saivism, Vaishnavism, Mahayan Buddhism and Tantrism gained popular favour and royal patronage. The Indo-Javanese art makes 'an extensive use of Indian motif—the *Kalamakara* : a lion's head and a crocodile—in decoration.' With the decline of the Majapahit, artistic activities came to an end in Java.

Bali. The neighbouring island of Bali is the only surviving Hindu colony in the Far East. In the fourth century A. D. a Hindu kingdom was established in Bali. In the sixth century A. D. a rich and prosperous Hindu kingdom flourished there under the Kaundinya Kshatriyas. According to the Chinese traveller *I-tsing Mul Sarvaptivadi* sect of Buddhism prevailed there under the patronage of the Kaundinyas in the later half

of the seventh century. One of the Kaundinya kings sent an envoy to China in 518 A. D. In the tenth century A. D. Ugrasen, Kesary and other kings bearing Indian names ruled there. In the later half of the tenth century Bali came under the Javanese sway and for several centuries together formed a part of the kingdom of the Javanese rulers. In 1839 the Dutch established their supremacy over Bali and 1911 witnessed the end of the reign of the last Hindu king of Bali. But it was the aggression of Islam in Java that forced its Hindu king to go to Bali. Henceforth the island of Bali became the seat of flourishing Indo-Javanese culture. Consequently even today Hinduism with all its old traditions and practices flourishes there. Thus while Hinduised Java succumbed to the raids of Islam, Bali retained its old and indigenous culture even to the present day. It is the last refuge of Brahmanical religion and Hindu culture in the Far East.

Borneo. It is a very big island east of Sumatra. There the Hindus established their colony as early as the first century of the Christian era. The oldest inscriptions and antiquities, pointing the Hindu cultural influence in Borneo, were discovered at Muara-Kaman on the Mahakam river. In the twelfth century Borneo was under the Javanese sway. Recently the ruins of a wooden temple and the stone image of Buddha and Shiva have been unearthed there. One of the kings of Borneo Mulvarman, son of Asva-varman and grand son of king Kundunga (Kaundinya), performed the great sacrifice called *Bahu Suvarnakam* (large quantity of gold) and erected *Yupas* (sacrificial pillars) with Sanskrit inscriptions to commemorate it. The inscriptions are dated about 400 A. D. and record Mulvarman's rich donations and gifts of 20,000 cows to the Brahmans in the holy field of Vaprakesvara. In the eastern Borneo many antiquities have been discovered at many places especially in the cave of Kombeng. Twelve stone images of the Brahmanical gods Shiva, Ganesh, Agatsya, Brahma, Skanda, Mahakal, Nandishvar etc. have been found in the cave. Though indigenous elements are visible in the architectural and sculptural art of Borneo, yet it is evolved on the Indian patterns of art. Hindu culture still flourishes there.

Philippines. Modern researches have proved that the people of South India had established their colonies in Philippines and they had considerably influenced all aspects of daily life. Handicrafts, coins, folk songs, traditions and many religious customs exhibit the Hindu influence there. The scripts of the people of Philippines bear striking resemblance with those of South India. In the realm of religious rites, rituals and assigning names the natives of Philippines followed Indians closely. The names of the places situated on the Luzon coast and the shores of the Manila Bay indicate their Sanskrit origin. The discovery of a Ganesh statue proves that people followed Brahmanism. The hill tribes of Luzon worship early Vedic gods even to this day.

Beyond the Philippines several islands are situated in the Pacific ocean. Scholars have to reveal us the deep cultural influence of India over these islands. The people of these islands have physical appearance similar to that of the Indo-Aryans. Their languages bear resemblance with those of the Pre-Aryan Indians like Santhals. Their religious and social customs and beliefs betray races of Hindu cultural influences. The Hula dance of Hawaii islands and Shiva dance of Samoa are similar to the folk dances of Bengal. Their use of conch shell, nose flute, musical bones, staple food stuffs and animals reveals Indian origin. 'Many of their decorative designs, crafts, traditions, ideas of phallic symbolism and images are examples of old Polinesian cultural traits derived from the Brahmanical civilisation.'

Hindu culture in the Colonies. For nearly fifteen hundred years and even down to the period when the Hindus lost their political independence in India, Hindu sovereigns were ruling over Indo-China and several islands of the Malaya Archipelago, from Sumatra to New Guinea and Philippines in the Pacific ocean. Indian religion and literature, Indian social institutions moulded the lives of the primitive races and made a thorough conquest of these far-off lands. The people of the Far East felt the impact of the Indian civilisation and culture. The aborigines imbibed a more elevated moral spirit, noble sense of spirituality and a higher intellectual taste through the religion,

art and literature of India. In fact they were raised to a higher plane of culture and civilisation. 'A greater India was established by a gentle fusion of races, by richly endowing the original inhabitants with the spiritual heritage of India.'

Religion. The inscriptions and images discovered in these colonies prove that besides the Brahmanical religion, Buddhism had also made its influence felt in these regions. Both often mixed together and flourished amicably. However, Buddhism was dominant in Burma and Siam, whereas Brahmanism was firmly established in other remaining colonies. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva were worshipped together with their satellite gods and goddesses. Magnificent temples were constructed for them and images of all the known Hindu gods and goddesses were made. Hindu religion is still prevalent in Bali. There the statues of Indra, Vishnu and Krishna are installed and Lord Shiva and Durga are worshipped and all those things which are used in India for worship are used even to this day in Bali. The Ramayan, the Mahabharat and the Puranas are recited in the temples there. Hinyan and Mahayan forms of Buddhism and the most debased tantric cults also flourished in these colonies. Java became important renowned centre of Buddhism and attracted great scholars like I-tsing, Dharmpal of Nalanda and Dipankara Srijnana of Vikramshila university for study.

Language and Literature. The Sanskrit language and literature were highly cultivated and most of the records were written in good and almost flawless Sanskrit. Several Sanskrit inscriptions of very high literary merit have been discovered in these colonies. There seems to have been dominance of Indian literary style. This indicates that the writers of these regions had an intimate knowledge of Sanskrit literature ; grammar, rhetoric, prosody, Indian epics, Puranas and Kavyas, Vedas, Vedanta, Smriti, works of Manu, Sushrata Panini and Kalidas. Epics and religious texts of Buddhism and Jainism were studied. Kings, ministers and high officials were scholars and they took a leading part in literary activity. Indo-Javanese literature flourished under the considerable influence of Sanskrit. It borrowed subject-matter from Indian literature. Its important monumental works are the old Javanese Ramayan, the prose

translation of the Mahabharat and numerous Kavyas and other works written on the stories of the Puranas. Indo-Javanese literature is the most remarkable product of the Indian colonisation. In Burma and Ceylon the study of the Buddhist texts in Pali led to the development of a new classical literature adopted everywhere.

Arts

All the architectural and sculptural monuments of the colonies were religious structures. They were most remarkable for their massive grandeur and artistic excellence. The buildings, shrines, temples and images show the thorough-going influence of Indian art. 'The colonial art, in fact, forms a type by itself. Although it went from India and the skilled and unskilled workmen imbibed traditions of their mother country (India), yet in their new environments, the Indian engineers and artisans assimilated new ideas and produced works which were different and in some respects assuredly superior to their original standard in India.' The massive temples at Angkor Vat in Cambodia, the greatest colossal Buddhist shrine of Barabudur in Java, the temples of the Lara-Jongrang group and the Anand temple at Pagan in Burma are the most renowned monuments of the Indian colonial art. They far exceed in grandeur of conception of design and skill of execution, finish and ornamentation that we know of in India itself.

Politics and Administration. In addition to religion, the influence of Hindu civilisation is also clearly marked in the political ideas and the system of administration. About the government of the colonies the Chinese annals inform us that the king had eight great ministers, called the "Eight Seats", all chosen from among the Brahmans. The king rubbed his body with perfumes, wore a very high hat and necklace of different kinds of jewels, was clothed in muslin, rode in carriages and mounted elephants. In war people blew conches and beat drums. It was the result of the Hindu cultural influence.

Society. The social life of the Hindu colony was based on the Indian pattern. The caste-system of the Hindus was introduced early enough in the colonies. Although the colonial society was divided into four broad divisions Brahmans, Ksha-

triyas, Vaisyas and Sudras, yet the caste-system had not attained that rigidity which is seen in India. Marriage among different castes was not prohibited. The marriage ceremony with all its details and the conjugal relations bear resemblances to those of India. Castes were not tied to specific professions of crafts. The Brahmans were divided into two groups designated after the deity which they worshipped Shiva or Buddha. The kings assumed Kshatriyahood and took the names of Varman meaning protector. Though untouchability was not known there, the Sudras formed a distinct caste. Women generally held high honourable position in society. If some ascended the throne, others held high posts in administration. Though the women practised the Sati system, they did not observe *Parda*. They had full liberty to choose their life partners. As in India the people of the colonies enjoyed gambling, cock-fight, music, dancing, theatrical performances and shadow plays *Wayang*. Their diet dress and ornaments resembled those in India. The Indians, according to certain statements, who went there inter-married and gradually the colonial society was transformed into a nominal Hindu structure. The colonial customs of Ka-la referred to by the Chinese are Indian in origin. "When they marry they give no other presents than areca-nuts, sometimes as many as two hundred trays. The wife enters the family of her husband. Their musical instruments are a kind of guitar, a transversal flute, copper cymbals, and iron drums. Their dead are burned, the ashes put into a golden jar and sunk into the sea."

Hindu culture in the colonies continued to be a vital dynamic force so long as Hinduism was in full vigour in India. The subsequent downfall of the Hindus in their own country, India, led to the decay of their colonial supremacy in the Far East. 'The fountainhead having dried up, the streams fed by it were also gradually choked, leading to their ultimate disappearance' and from the eleventh century onward in the Hindu colonies of the South East Asia the indigenous elements began gradually to assert themselves freely till Islam, taken there by the Indian Muslims, was firmly planted there in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

"The History of the colonies demonstrates the unsoundness of the popular belief that Hinduism cannot be adopted by foreigners but is meant only for those who are born without its fold. It shows the great vigour with which it could absorb and vitalise foreign culture and could elevate even the most primitive races to higher sphere of culture and civilisation. If we remember that Indian culture and civilisation played a similar role, though perhaps in a lesser degree, in western, central and eastern Asia, we can realise an aspect of the true greatness of India, not always sufficiently emphasised. The colonial and cultural expansion of India is one of the most brilliant, but forgotten episodes of Indian History, of which any Indian may justly feel proud."[1]

An Advanced History of India by Dr. R. C. Majumdar and others, p. 223.

Chapter 11

Contribution of South India to Indian Culture

SOUTH India or peninsular India lying to the south of the Tungabhadra river has been recognised as geologically older than northern India. The existence of man, therefore, is much earlier in the former than in the latter. The excavations at Adichanallur in the Tinnevelley District indicate the existence of palaeolithic man in the south. From palaeolithic man we come to the neolithic man and from neolithic to the pre-historic man. This proves that man was in existence in South India from the use of polished stone to that of iron, while in the corresponding period in northern India the transition was from stone to copper and later to iron. The archaeological remains in south indicate that in due course there appeared two groups of people, one civilised and the other much less so ; and the former group had attained a much higher degree of civilisation before the Aryan advent in the south. This group spoke Dravadian languages and constituted a distinct racial unit. When the Aryan immigration did take place in southern India, many elements of the native civilisation found entry into the civilisation and culture that ultimately developed into the Indian civilisation of to-day. When we speak of the constribution of South India to Indian culture, we mean those very elements of civilisation of South India which were incorporated into the complex civilisation and culture of modern India.[1] Dr. Smith

[1] *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III, Ch. 'South Indian Culture', pp. 64-65.

rightly remarks that 'early Indian history, as a whole, cannot be viewed in true perspective until the non-Aryan institutions of the south receive adequate treatment.'

The Tamil Country. The territory to the south of the rivers Krishna and Tungabhadra and extending to the Cape Comorin formed the Tamil country. The inhabitants spoke the Tamil language. This region comprised three Tamil states—the kingdoms of Pandya, Chera and Chola. The early history of these kingdoms cannot be precisely traced. The Pandya kingdom is reputed to be the most ancient of Tamil states. Its capital was at Madura, a great seat of learning. Its another important town was Korkai, a great sea-port and the cradle of the civilisation of South India. The Pandyas were engaged in constant warfare with their neighbours, the Pallavas and the Cholas. The Pandya kingdom was ultimately conquered by Malik Kafur in 1310 A.D. The Chola kingdom lay on the Coromondal coast with its capital at Kanjeevaram. Though it fell an easy prey to the extending power of the Pallavas, it again gathered strength in 740 A. D. and once again became supreme in southern India, rendered Ceylon as its tributary and advanced its limits as far as Kaling. The Chola kings had a good navy. Their administrative machinery was highly organised. The self-government was the most remarkable feature of their administration. The Cholas retained their independence till Malik Kafur defeated the last Chola ruler in 1310. The kingdom of the Cheras comprised the modern states of Travancore, Cochin and the districts of Malabar in the far south. It kings did not much meddle with the politics of the south. They rather followed a more quiet channel of trade and commerce both internal and external and continued to flourish in their own way in happy obscurity. After the fall of the Andhras, the Pallavas gradually established their supremacy in the far south. They ruled from three centres namely Vatapi in the west (south-east of Kolhapur), Vengi in the east and Kanjeevaram in the south. The Kanjeevaram branch was the most powerful and ruled for a period of 450 years. The Pallava dynasty counted several kings who were not only brave warriors but also liberal patrons of art and learning. The Pallava school of art and

sculpture is one of the most interesting Indian schools of art. Towards the end of the ninth century the Pallavas were defeated by the Cholas.

South or Deccan

The South or Deccan, the corrupt form of the Sanskrit word 'Dakshinapath', lies between the Vindhya mountain and the Tungabhadra river. It is a rocky dry table-land watered by three rivers—the Godavari, the Krishna and the Tungabhadra. Very little is known about the early history of the Deccan. The earliest dynasty about which we know is the *Andhra dynasty*, an account of which is already given in the earlier chapter. The Andhra or Satakarni dynasty ruled for four and a half centuries, approximately from 225 B.C. to 225 A.D. The downfall of the Andhras gave the signal for the rise of many local dynasties, which flourished with varying fortunes until they were absorbed by the empire of the Chalukyas. Special mention must be made of the *Vakatakas* of Berar who came into prominence about 300 A. D. and continued for about 200 years. The kings of this dynasty were lovers of art and some of the caves at Ajanta are attributed to them. In the fourth century a Vakatak monarch married a daughter of the great Gupta emperor Chandragupta II. This alliance was of the most importance ; for it made the Vakatakas the channel through which the art and culture of northern India found its way to the Deccan, whence it was ultimately transmitted, through the Pallavas of Kanchi, to southern India. Another local dynasty which sprang up about the same time is known as the *Kadambas* who governed the country between the Western Ghats and the sea. They were patrons of Jainism. They ruled until the middle of the sixth century A. D. when they were conquered by the Chalukyas. Another dynasty which played an important part in the Deccan was the *Gangas* that governed a greater part of modern Mysore from the second to the eleventh century. Some of its kings were patrons of Jainism and the colossal statue of the Jain saint Gomateswara, 57 feet in height, at Sravana Belgola, was erected by the minister of a Ganga king in 984 A. D. The statue is unrivalled for daring conception and gigantic dimensions.

About 550 A. D. the great *Chalukya* dynasty appears on the

scene. The most important of Chalukya kings were Pulkesin I (550-567), and Pulkesin II (606-642). The former had wrested power from a Pallava ruler of Vatapi (550) and the later from another Pallava king of Vangi(615). But Vikramaditya II, a Chalukya king, crushed the power of the Pallavas of Kanjeevaram in 740 A. D. As their empire extended across the whole of the Deccan from east to west, the Chalukyas also came to have two important centres of their kingdom ; one was at Vatapi which they named as Badami and the other at Vengi.

The Chalukyas of Badami continued to wield power for two centuries till the last ruler of the dynasty was defeated and killed in a battle by the Rashtrakuta king Dantidurga in 754. This enabled the Rashtrakutas to succeed the Chalukyas in western India. Though Chalukyas were Hindus, they were tolerant of other faiths. Besides, they were ardent lovers of art and architecture. Many splendid temples were built during their rule. The caves at Badami give us an idea of the excellent sculpture of the times. The *Rashtrakutas* had lived as self-governing class in Maharashtra from very early times and now they spread their power in all directions and successfully maintained it for 200 years. Some of the Rashtrakuta kings had both wealth and leisure to attend to works of art. They patronised fine arts very liberally. The most famous Ellora temple in Andhra state, with its beautiful splendid pillared halls, cut out of solid rock was the work of a Rashtrakuta king Krishna I (757-800).

Ultimately the Rashtrakuta dynasty was overthrown in 973 by Tailapa who traced his lineage from the Chalukya kings. The dynasty that he founded is, therefore, called as the dynasty of the *later Chalukyas*. From their capital Kalyani they ruled for about 200 years over an extensive region of the country. When the power of the later Chalukyas was declining the more powerful dynasties of the *Yadavas*, the *Hoysalas* and the *Kakatiyas* from within the empire cut of slices of the imperial territory and set up their own independent kingdoms. The Yadavas, who established themselves at Devagiri, had overthrown the Chalukyas in 1190. The Hoysalas (1047-1327) ruled in the Kanarese country (Mysore) with Dwarasamudra as

their capital. The kings of this dynasty were great lovers of art which was closely associated with their religious zeal. Their temples introduced a new style of architecture known as the Hoysala School of Art. The beautiful Isvara temple at Arsikere in Mysore State is one of the finest examples of the Hoysala style of architecture. "It is characterised by a richly carved base or plinth supporting the temple, which is polygonol, star-shaped in the plan and roofed by a low pyramidal tower, often surmounted by a base-shaped ornament." The Kakatiyas enjoyed independence with their capital at Warangal. These kingdoms were blown up turn by turn before the blast of the Muslim invasion from Delhi in the reign of Alauddin Khilji. The Hindu rule in the Deccan was at an end.

Tamil Culture

The people of the Tamil country developed a distinct culture of their own known as the Tamil culture. The best period of this culture may roughly be marked off as extending from the beginning of the Mauryan age to the termination of the Andhra period of Indian History.

Society. The south Indian society then mostly consisted of those who directly tilled the soil as well as those who depended upon the soil indirectly. Below them were agricultural labourers (Kudis), four groups of which are mentioned, Panan, Paraiyan, Tudiyan and Kadamban. They, perhaps, constituted the bulk of what have come down to us as the depressed classes of the Deccan to-day. Then, there were carpenters and smiths. Though there were weavers, but they did not form a separate class of people. There are references to other classes of people such as Malavars, Nagas, etc. The former were hunter-folk, described as warriors who looted persons on the high-ways, while the latter were the fishermen who were looked upon as of lower status in society ; they were engaged in cutting and making ornaments of chank. The hardy peasant folk made good soldiers and stone monuments to warriors who had fallen in battle were common objects. In a society so formed, the Brahman came in as an immigrant from northern India. By his character and sound learning he secured a much respected position of sublimity in society. Though in due

course society fell into the same kind of organisation as the Aryan Society in the north, the four classes or *varnas* and four *ashramas* or stages in life were unknown in the Tamil country. People were classified into groups according to their occupations, but the main core of society was grouped into two—those that ploughed and cultivated the land constituting the large bulk, and those that got others to do it for their own advantage, a small select class of people. From among the latter, came the royal families who were permitted to take girls from the other classes in marriage and not give girls in return, a principle well-known to the Aryan Society.

Though there is nowhere a full account of the various sections into which the society was actually divided into south, but from incidental references we can gather this. The various classes lived a life of their own as distinct from that of the others. Each had its own specific occupation and certain privileges to enjoy. Slavery was unknown among the ancient Tamils. In the matter of inter-dining and inter-marriage, each group seems to have its own traditions, rules or practices. 'There is no evidence of any effort at the imposing of customs and habits from above, or of demands for assimilation from below. Such assimilation as there was, came as a result of good example set by people for whose learning and conduct of life there was a certain amount of general respect.'[1] In short it can be said that social organisation in Tamil land was based on blood relations, professions, religious beliefs and environment.

Though there were large towns like Madura in Tamil, yet majority of people lived in villages. Persons of higher castes lived in extensive palatial buildings. Their entrances or main gateways were very impressive. City-dwellers enjoyed luxuries and wealth. The Tamils acquired proficiency in the art of building forts and other works of defence. The Tamil women enjoyed complete social freedom. Polygamy was in vogue to some extent. Love marriages were popular and there was possibility of developing love before marriage. Prostitutes and educated royal dancing girls lived in the towns.

The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. III, p. 68.

Dress and Diet. The dress of the Tamil people was simple and consisted of only two garments, namely a *dhoti* and a turban. Among the principal ornaments used by the Tamil women were bangles, necklaces, armlets, waistbelts and anklets. The diet of the people consisted of rice and meat. They were also fond of drinking wine. The kings and princes sometimes indulged in expensive wines 'brought by the Yavanas (Greeks and Romans) in their good shops.' Numerous intoxicating drugs were used. As the soldiers formed their own distinct class, meat-eating was confined to a particular group.

Economic Conditions. Besides agriculture, the other occupations known were cattle-rearing, weaving, fishing and trading. Cattle-rearing seems to have been the occupation of a class distinct from the agriculturists. Dairy produce was regarded valuable. Weaving, mostly in cotton, was of fine counts. 'The South Indian weavers' fame for muslin-weaving seems to have been well established as far back as the beginning of the Christian era. Some cotton stuff have been so fine that they were spoken of as a web of woven wind or the vapour of boiling milk.' As regards metal, iron was known to the people, gold was available in plenty and salt was manufactured. It seems that copper was known much early. Use of ivory and inlay work in ivory is also referred to. The Tamils practised widely fishing for edible fish as well as for pearl, chank and coral, which were finely worked into various articles of value for trade. Fish curing seems to have been known and cured fish was again an article of trade in the South.

There was a considerable internal trade probably by barter. But extensive use of Roman coins indicate that coins were not unknown. Overseas trade had been common. Indian ships went to great distances and even touched the coastal frontiers of the Chinese Empire. Articles of export comprised the spices of the Western Ghats, agricultural products, pearls, gold, precious gems like beryl and diamond, sandalwood, alœs-wood, cotton goods, particularly the fine muslins, etc. Peacocks and even monkeys were sent to Babylon, Egypt, Greece and Rome. The volume of trade was 'so great as to absorb more than half of the eastern import trade of the Roman Empire' and involved

the import of coins and specie to a large extent. The vast numbers of Roman coins found at Madura reveal the fact that there was a brisk trade between the Tamil land and Rome. There was a *Yavana* (Roman) colony at the mouth of the river Kavery and *Yavana* lamps, wines and vases are frequently referred to in the poems of the Tamil literature. There are references about ships of foreigners coming up the river, and anchoring in the port of Kranganur (Muziris) bringing gold for payment and carrying away instead pepper and spices, the products of the Western Ghats. "Such extensive commerce is evidence of a prosperous country with a teeming population under a fairly well ordered government, giving assurance of the degree of peace which is the absolute pre-requisite of a flourishing commerce."[1] It seems that life was orderly and peaceful and people enjoyed plenty generally.

Religious Life. In the domain of religion, people were tolerant of other creeds and practised the idea of 'live and let live.' Religious fanaticism leading to disturbances was absent. But religious convictions of people and the forms and methods of worship, varied from planting of stones to the dead and worship by festivals at one end, to various other forms culminating in the refinement of Vedic philosophy and noble religion at the other. People practised many forms of worship between these two extremes. Inspite of wide religious differences, religious intolerance causing wide-spread revolts and persecution was conspicuous by its absence. There were mainly four gods : Siva-Nilkanth, associated with the aspect of destruction ; 'the White one of the plough share and the plamyra flag', equated with Baladeva or Balaram, the elder brother of Krishna ; 'the Blue One with the eagle (Garuda) flag', identified with the Vishnu or more specifically Krishna: the lastly 'The Rider on the Elephant with the flag of the peacock', identified with Skanda or Kartikeya of the northern India. Vishnu and Vishnu worship were already known there. In addition to these principal gods, there were several minor deities, each was worshipped in its own particular way.

[1] *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III, p. 170.

Later on, all the three principal religions of the northern India Jainism, Buddhism and Brahmanism were introduced into the south. Jainism was introduced in the time of Chandragupta Maurya. After the advent of Bhadrabahu in the south Jainism continued to spread far and wide in the Deccan and by the second century A.D. Jainism was firmly planted in the soil of the Tamil land. In due course Madura became the principal centre of Jainism. Some of the Pandya rulers of the South were Jains. Later on the Vaishnava and Saiva saints of Tamil gave a rude shock to Jainism by their preaching and *Bhakti*.

Though Asoka spread Buddhism in Tamil land, the Buddhist missionaries spread it far and wide by their individual efforts. They wandered from place to place throughout the south preaching the *Astangmarg* of lord Buddha. In the early centuries of the Christian era Nagpattinam, Tondmandalam and Kanjeevaram developed into high flourishing Buddhist centres. In 640 according to Hiuen Tsang's account Kanjeevaram had nearly ten thousand Buddhist monks residing in local monasteries.

By the seventh century orthodox Hindusim overshadowed both Jainism and Buddhism and it became the dominant religion in the south. Two principal sects of Hinduism, Saivism and Vaishnavism, gave rise to the Bhakti cult. The saints of Saivism were known as Nayanmars and those of Vaishnavism Alvars. There were sixty three Nayanmars while twelve Alvars. The most famous saints of Saivism were Appar, Sambandha, Sundaramurti and Manikka Vachaka. Their devotional songs have been very popular. The Vaishnava saints Alvars also composed songs and hymns in praise of Vishnu. ' They were recited and sung in the Vishnu temples. The collection of their hymns is called *Prabandha*.

Literature. In the seventh century B.C. in Tamil land language had taken a definite shape. Tamil, Malayalam, Kanarese and Telugu have been the principal languages of the land. But Tamil is the oldest and purest and like Pali possesses the earliest vernacular literature in India. 'A code of law like that of Manu in North India developed into South India under the

name of Apastamba in the fifth or fourth century B.C. It grew up in the Andhra country and bears the mark of the Aryan influence. But of the indigenous literature of the south—the Tamil literature—unaffected by the Aryan influence, the earliest book we hear of is the *Kural*, an ethical classic.' It has 133 chapters half of which deal with politics and economics. Its author Tiru-Valluvar was born about the second century B. C. in Mylapore. It was he who set the standard of literary excellence. In the third century B. C. there flourished a famous grammarian named Tolkappiyr. Sanskrit began to exercise its influence on Tamil during his age. Tamil poems composed in the second and third centuries of the Christian era are still available. The Tamil literature is the richest and best so far the epics are concerned. It has famous five epics. *Silappadhikaram* and *Manimekalam* are the famous Tamil epics, composed in the first or second century A. D. Many of the Tamil works were composed by Jain and Buddhist scholars. Madura became the centre of great literary activity in Tamil land. During the reign of the Pallavas the hymns and devotional songs and the *mantras* of the saints of Saivism and Vaishnavism were collected together into book form. This led to the development of the Sangam classics. Twelfth century is an important age of the Tamil literature. Celebrated literary figures flourished in this period.

Art and Architecture. The arts of painting and sculpture highly developed under the patronage of the Pallava and Chola rulers. The existence of innumerable magnificent temples and buildings in the south not only testifies to the love of building and sculpture evinced by south Indian rulers but also bears the impress of a new technique in architecture giving rise to the Pallava-Chola School of Arts which is to be described later on.

Maritime actiuities and Commerce. As the Tamil States were maritime countries, the people of those states developed into a great sea-going people and plied their ships in the neighbouring oceans. 'They were the earliest people to build an Indian navy and marine and develop a maritime commerce.' The powerful navy of the Cholas of the Tamil land conquered Ceylon, the islands of the Burmese coasts, the Malaya Peninsula, Malabar coast islands, the Nicobar islands and the islands of

the Indian Archipelago. This helped a good deal in laying the foundation of Greater India. The Tamil country was rich in spices, ivory, wood, pearls and precious stones. Muslins, silks and felts were amongst their special manufactures. These valuable articles were exported from Indian ports to Egypt and Arabia on one side and to the Malaya Archipelago and China on the other and foreign gold, particularly from Rome, poured into south India. Heaps of Roman coins have been unearthed in the Tamil country. The Roman merchants had regular colonies in the seaports of southern India and one such is mentioned by a Tamil writer at Kaveripaddinam. Some Tamil poems have references to Roman or Yavan ships and their crew visiting Indian ports. Some of the Pandya kings had Roman soldiers in their service and employed them as bodyguards.

The Tamil Administration. The Tamil country enjoyed a highly systematised and organised administration. The bulk of the Tamil people lived in small villages and number of villages were combined to form an administrative unit called *Kurram.* A number of Kurrams formed a district called *Nadu* and a group of these Nadus or districts formed a division of *Kottam*, and a number of divisions of Kottams formed a *Mandal* or a province. There were certain number of townships. They were so large enough as to constitute divisions. Each of these units was placed under the charge of an officer of the government. The biggest administrative unit was under a prince or a member of the royal family. The government of the Kurram was placed in the hands of the village assembly having deliberative and executive functions. Land revenue formed the principal source of income to the State. A number of other taxes and cesses, mentioned in the contemporary literature, were also levied by the State. In season of scarcity remissions of taxes were granted. Large sums were spent by the government in making and maintaining roads and irrigation works which existed extensively in Tamil country.

But the important feature peculiar to Tamil administration is the growth of the local self-government in the form of village autonomy. Each village was a self-governing unit and had its general assembly which annually elected the executive body of

the village, known as "the great men of the village". Besides these, there were several working committees for looking after the various branches of the administration. Taxes were collected in the name of the village Assembly. Records were kept and criminal justice was also administered by the village Assembly. The death sentence was subject to appeals to higher authorities.

Peaceful penetration of the Aryan culture in the South and its influence.[1] The Deccan is separated from the North by the Vindhyas and the Narbada and the Tapti. It is described in the Epics as covered with dense forests, *Dandakaranya* or *Mahakantara.* The early Aryans found it difficult to penetrate. There are, however, legends of an early Aryan colony, led to the south by the Sage Agastya, who was reputed to have been the first to introduce Aryan customs and traditions in the southern India. The Aryan penetration through the Vindhya mountains and the Narmada 'is generally regarded as having taken place in the days of the *Aitaraya Brahmana* about 800 B.C.' Though the Aryan kingdoms like Vidarbha and Asmaka were established on the boundary of the south, the Aryan highway was along the west coast. Our knowledge of the south, as gathered from Panini (7th century B. C.), is comparatively slender; it grows considerably when we come to Katyayana (about 300 B.C.) and is much fuller and includes the far south at the time of Patanjali (middle of the second century B. C.) as there are references to Kanchi as a *Ghatika* (a settlement of learned Brahmans). Later on, by the time of Asoka Aryan India had a considerable knowledge of the south. Asoka's 13th Rock Edict gives us an accurate information about the kingdoms of the south. Asoka himself sent a Buddhist mission to the Deccan in 256 B.C. led by a monk named Rakhita who is said to have made 60,000 Buddhist converts. However, in the Mauryan age Brahmans, Buddhists and Jains, the votaries of Sanskrit literature, came in the south and made settlements there. They lived peacefully and pursued their religious practices and followed social institutions unmolested by the people. The influence that 'they exercised upon Tamil society was the influence more of example

The Cultural Heritage of India, Vol. III, pp 72-86.

than of compulsion by authority.' It was at this time that the Aryan Brahman was fairly well established at the head of the society in Tamil culture and was much respected and looked up to for various purposes. This is evident of the fact that the influence of the Aryan culture was in the full swing in the period of Asoka. The classical works of Tamil, called *Sangam* works, show general evidence of Aryan and Sanskrit influences, in addition to the evidence of the immigrant Jainism and Buddhism. There seems to have been a road way along the west coast, perhaps the easier one, and another along the east coast as well. These roads were used for southern immigration, evidence about which is also confirmed by information regarding south India in Sanskrit literature. Therefore, we may conclude that there was a considerable opportunity for contact between the Dravadian and Aryan cultures and subsequent mutual influence. However, it should be noted that the Aryanisation be regarded as essentially a process of adaptation. Because some of the cultural elements in the south are of Aryan character, while a few others are distinctly traceable to the pre-Aryan times.

Pallava contribution to Indian culture[1]

The Aryanisation of South India was completed during the rule of the Pallavas. They exercised their supremacy for nearly five hundred years, from the fifth century to the ninth century. 'Their grants show that the Aryan structure of the society had gained firm hold on the south by the sixth century A.D. Grants to Apathambhiya and Baudhayana Brahmans are specifically mentioned which show that the north Indian Dharmashashtras had acquired authority in the Pallava kingdom.'[2] Sanskrit had established its sway and was the language used for all royal epigraphs barring a few earlier ones. In fact Pallavas were great patrons of Sanskrit. Most of the inscriptions of the Pallavas were in Sanskrit and even in Tamil inscriptions the *Prasasti* portions were composed in Sanskrit. Temples were

1 For more details refer to *History of the Pallavas of Kanchi* by Gopalan ; *Administrative and Social life under the Pallavas* by C. Minakshi.

2 *A Survey of Indian History* by Panikkar, p. 112.

the important centres of Sanskrit studies. Bharavi, the well-known poet of Sanskrit and the author of the *Kiratarjuniyam*, is said to have adorned the court of a Pallava king Simhavishnu. Similarly Dandin, the famous author of standard work on poetics, is reported to have flourished in the reign of another Pallava king Narasimhavarman II who ruled in the later half of the seventh century. Mahendravarman I was a celebrated author. It is said that he composed an interesting burlesque called *Mattavilasaprahasana*. It is a social comedy. It is said that 'the Sanskrit plays published recently in Trivendrum as Bhasa's were abridgments, made during this period, of earlier works of Bhasa and Sudraka for being staged at Pallava court.' Poems of Kalidas, Bharavi and works of Varahamihir became well-known in the Pallava country. In the village of Kurram near Kanchivaram there lived 108 families that studied the four Vedas. Under the royal patronage Tamil classics also grew having Aryan influence. The university of Kanchi, the seat of Sanskrit learning and then the greatest centre of education in the south, had played an important part in the cultural expansion in the south. The Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang visited Kanchi and there he saw hundreds of Buddhist scholars and monks of Mahayan sect. About the people of Kanchi he says—'They are deeply attached to the principles of honesty and truth and highly esteem learning.' Vatsyayana, the logician and the author of *Nyaya Bhashya*, who lived in the fourth century A. D. was a pandit of Kanchi. Dignaga, a great Buddhist scholar and philosopher, had his training in Kanchi and Mayuravarma of the Kadamba dynasty also went for higher studies in the fifth century to Kanchi and completed his vedic studies there. The University of Kanchi[1] dominated the intellectual life of the south as Nalanda did in the north. It can, therefore, be rightly claimed that Kanchi of the Pallavas was the great centre from which the Sanskritisation and Aryanisation of the south as well as the Indian colonies in the Far East proceeded. Till the eighth century, the Aryanisation of the Hindu colonies of

See also *Hindu University at Kanchi* by V. R. R. Dikshitar.

Kambuja and Champa, through the Pallava influence, continued. Because the Pallavas were a great maritime power, their activities on the sea were mainly directed towards maintaining friendly relations and close contacts with the countries of the south-east Asia. The Pallava kings were Brahmanical Hindus and most of them were devoted to Shiva. Saivism took a definite shape in the south with certain salient features. The southern doctrine of Saivism was made the official cult in Kambuja and Champa. Sanskrit was made their official language and more than a hundred inscriptions in that language have been discovered in Champa. It was in Pallava characters that inscriptions were written and engraved in Kambuja and 'even the names of royal personages like Mahendravarman closely followed those of the Pallavas. The Kambuja architecture bears the undoubted marks of Pallava traditions.'[1] (For the details of the contribution of the Pallavas in the realm of art see the later portion of this very chapter). Like Kambuja, architecture in Champa was predominantly of southern type. The Sailendra monarchs in Java and Sumatra and Malaya Archipelago derived their cultural inspiration from the south, by their close communication with the southern kingdoms. In many of the inscriptions of the Sailendras south Indian grantha character is used and 'many of the clan names in Sumatra are the same as in South India, *e. g.*, Cholas and Pandyas.' All this makes it demonstrably clear that the Hindu cultural influence working in the Far East Hindu colonies had their origin in South India. No doubt this forms a great contribution of the south towards the expansion of Indian culture and civilisation.

It the realm of religion the Pallavas had made their own contribution. According to Sardar Panikkar the great religious reform which was to sweep India in the eighth century originated at the Pallava court. It were the Pallavas who laid the foundation of the Great Reformation in the eighth century. The Saiva and Vaishnava saints of the south flourished in the Pallava period. The greatest Saiva saints were the contemporaries of Pallava king Narsimhavarman, while the last of the Saiva saints

A Survey of Indian History by Panikkar, p. 120.

lived in the closing years of the Pallava rule. Similarly the Vaishnava saints Alavars were liberally patronised by the Pallavas. The songs and hymns of these saints were remarkable for depth of devotional feeling and piety. Consequently the Vaishnava and Saiva literature of the Tamils, a noble expression of religious thought, developed well under the Pallavas.

The cultural contribution of the South. South India has certain special characteristics namely the continuity and stability of its social organisation and the unity of its culture. The Pandya, Chola and Chera kingdoms of the south of the earliest days continued unbroken in tradition through ages upto quite recent times. Dynastic changes did not affect the entity of these units. The Pandyamandalam, Tondamandalam and Kerala of the South were, in fact, geographical units which had an established and continued political and cultural existence. On the contrary in northern India history was based largely on dynasties. The South, therefore, could provide definite cultural contribution.[1]

The Bhakti cult. The cultural contribution of the South was in the form of the Bhakti cult. The doctrine of Bhakti means complete devotion and surrender to personal God. Bhakti is the true record of mystical experience and of ecstacies of moments of light when the devotees see the vision of God. The individual's faith in and devotion to personal god is interpreted as a means of attaining salvation. In the Bhakti cult, the deity in the abstract is conceived of in some form suitable for intervention in human affairs. The mental conception of god is transformed into physical forms for the uninitiated and temples are constructed and God is to be installed in them in the shape of images of various kinds. Votaries of Bhakti go there and worship in common. Worship is prescribed in forms suitable to the conception of the deity. All this made religion well-defined and organised in particular forms for devotion and practical worship. The Bhakti movement, which has in its

[1] Refer to *Some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture* by S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar.

genesis the worship of the gods Shiva and Vishnu, had its beginning in the South before the Aryan culture had penetrated in that region and so it is pre-Aryan. Saiva and Vaishnava saints of the South developed the Bhakti cult considerably. The Bhakti of Nayanmars, the Saiva saints, was very noble and ideal. Their devotional songs were remarkable for their piety, simplicity and intense attachment to God. By virtue of their songs, hymns, *mantras* and devotion these saints had caused profound change in religion throughout the Tamil country. Similarly the Vaishnava saints Alavars encouraged the Bhakti cult. In praise of their personal God Vishnu they composed poems and songs and gradually developed their own literature—called *Sangam* classics. The efflorescence of Bhakti is witnessed in the *Sangam* literature of the Pallava rule. The Bhakti literature—the *Tevaram* and the *Tiruvachakam* of the Saivas and the *Prabandham* of the Alavars of the Vaishnavas—belong to the Pallava age. As N. N. Ghosh points out the religious literature of the Bhakti cult gives evidence of the development of *Agamas* (Shastric literature) which lies at the root of the temple worship and is a direct product of the religion of the Bhakti or devotional cult. The whole of the *Agam* literature, both Vaishnava and Saiva, numbering more than 120, came into existence to fulfil the needs of the temple worship. The Bhakti cult made temple worship the prominent feature of religion.

This Bhakti cult in the form of Saivism and Vaishnavism spread to Northern India. Vaishnavism centred round Pandharpur in Maharashtra and found a convenient centre in the region of Mathura, hallowed as the birth place of Lord Krishna. But it was from the twelfth to the fifteenth century in the face of Islam that the Bhakti cult took definitely the form of Vaishnava sects in northern India with peculiar devotion to two avataras of Vishnu, Rama and Krishna ; Rama retained his hold chiefly through the famous Hindi *Ramayana* of Tulsidas and Krishna exercised greater fascination in Gujerat under Vallabhacharya and in Bengal under Chaitanya.

The protest against the Bhakti cult. It should be noted that if the Bhakti cult had its origin in the south, its protest also originated there. When worship in temples under the regular

system prescribed by the various *Agamas* reached its highest development in the south, natural reaction set in and reforming spirits arose to protest against its necessary limitations and exclusions. The chief exponents of this protest came to be called Siddhas (*sittas* in Tamil) who laid emphasis upon personal religion of the Yogic kind as of the highest importance. Protest generally took the following form : "It is foolishness to roam about seeking God in temples and images and travelling to the holy places. Your God is within you and what is essential is to learn to realize that." Passages in support of this protest could be quoted from such an early writer as Tirumular of the South. Though this protest against the forms of worship arose in the South, but it received greater emphasis in the North owing to the advent of Islam as a religion in practice. Kabir and Nanak were the great exponents of this protest in the northern India.

Rise of Lingayatism. The advent of Islam and the iconoclastic tendencies of the early Muslim rulers made north India no longer the peaceful home for the safe pursuit of Brahmanism. This led to a considerable influx of Brahmans south wards, carrying with them certain peculiar developments· of Brahmanism as then practised in Northern India. They took with them Tantrikism, a debased form of Saktism which is a rigorous form of one aspect of Saivism. This led to the development of the worship of a supreme goddess in one form or another. In addition to this, Pasupata and Kapalika sects, votaries of more rigorous form of Saivism, also developed in the south. This culminated in another form of Saivism called Vira-Saivism or Lingayatism which had its most fertile field in the Deccan.

Liberalism and absence of religious persecution. The period of the development of the Bhakti cult in the form of Saivism and Vaishnavism and temple worship of the deities in the South is marked with the spirit of liberalism and absence of religious persecution. The State and its ruler were regarded as something distinct. The State and its politics were not mixed with the religion of its ruler. Whatever the personal persuasion of the ruler might have been, his individual religion was not elevated to the position of State religion as was the case with many Muslim rulers. This particular position of the king provided

no chance for any attempts at unity or uniformity in religion, and this consequently removed one of the fruitful causes of the religious persecutions and bitter intolerance. Each group of people in the State was allowed full liberty for its own course in respect of religion. This spirit of liberalism and toleration pervaded all walks of public life and manifested itself in several developments of human activity. Rulers adopted the same principle of liberalism in administration and this led to the growth of local administrative institutions that ultimately provided a popular self-governing agency which regulated social, economic and public life in the South. There have been plenty of epigraphic evidences of the free local institutions for social and administrative work during the Chola rule.

South Indian Temples : an institution by themselves. Art is the handmaid of religion. The Bhakti cult, the *Agama* literature and temple worship naturally led to the development of temple architecture in the Deccan. A large number of temples were constructed all over the south. The south Indian temples of Shiva and Vishnu in their magnificence and magnitude are living monuments of devotion of the votaries of the Bhakti cult, who contributed generously in money and labour for their construction. In due course these south Indian temples became the centres of public and religious life of the people of their localities. There they gathered to worship, to meditate deeply, to discuss critically political and social problems and exchange social amenities. They freely held public meetings, social gatherings and religious *Kirtanas* and *Kathanatakas* in the sabha mandapas of pillared halls of the public temple. In early ages, colleges were attached to the more important temples where free education was given in religious and secular subjects. The famous Ennayiram Temple College, that accommodated 340 students, had ten different departments and the students were educated there completely free. Therefore, the South Indian Temples have been an institution by themselves and the colleges attached to them were predominently Hindu in character.

Art in South India—The Dravidian style of architecture. Numerous beautiful Buddhist *stupas* seem to have been erected all over the Deccan in the times of the Andhras. But few

remains of these have survived. The most celebrated was the great *stupa* at Amravati at the mouth of the Krishna river. Not only were the railings of this magnificent stupa made of marble, but the dome itself was covered with the white slabs of the same material. Undoubtedly it must have produced a marvellous effect when it was intact. Now this entire stupa is in ruins, and the pieces of its railings have been shifted partly to the Government Museum at Madras and partly to the British Museum, London, where they adorn the main staircase. The stupa was probably begun in the second century B.C. but the stone railings were added four centuries later. The dome and the railings are covered with innumerable carvings in low relief chiefly depicting scenes from the life of Buddha. In the earlier carvings the Blessed One is often represented by a symbol, in the later the Buddha figure appears. It thus points the period of transition between the style of Bharhut stupa and the Mathura school of sculpture. At Amravati the figures are characterised by slim, blithe features and they are represented in most difficult poses and curves. The sculptures of the stupa give a vivid picture of the happy, care-free life of the time, the palaces, walled towns, houses and temples. This points out that the technique of art had reached a high degree of development. A recent authority remarks, "This is the most voluptious and the most delicate flower of India's sculpture." At Nagarjunikonda important relics of the early Christian centuries have also been discovered. They 'include a *stupa*, two Chaityas and a monastery. Near the *stupa* were found slabs of limestone illustrating scenes from Buddha's life.'

1. *The Pallava Art.* But the history of architecture and sculpture in South India begins with the Pallava temples which introduce a new technique called the Dravidian style.[1] In addition to the temples, in Kanchi and other places, 'some of the rock-cut temples known as the seven Pagodas or *Rathas* of Mamallapurama are built in this style which may justly be

For Pallava architecture, refer to *Pallava Architecture* by A.H. Longhurst (Memoir of the Archaeological Survey of India, No. 17); *Indian Architecture* by Percy Brown, Chapter XVI.

called the Pallava style of art.' In fact, Pallava contribution to Indian culture is unique. Undoubtedly their edifices are among the noblest monuments in South India. From an early date they created an architecture of their own which was to be the basis of all the styles of the south. The caves and structural temples and other architectural remains of the Pallavas form an important chapter in Hindu art. The Pallava architecture has two phases—(i) rock-cut architecture from 610-690 ; it includes *mandapas* or *rāthas* (monolithic temples); (ii) structural from 690-900 ; it includes temples. A *mandapa* is an open pavilion, a hall with cells in the back wall. It is excavated in a rock. A *ratha* is a monolithic shrine. Many of the architectural productions of the Pallavas have a figure of lion on the prominent place. This heraldic beast was made to serve as a symbol of the Pallava Simhavishnu or lion (simha) ancestry.

The town of Mahavallipuram or Mamallapuram, thirty two miles south of Madras, founded by the great Pallava King Narasimhavarman (625-645) on the sea-beach, has many cave-temples or mandapas decorated with fine reliefs. The mandapas are ten in number and are found on a hill. They are remarkable not for their size but for the exceptional character of their design and execution. The pillars, the facade and the sculpture combined with the architecture are the salient features of these *mandapas*. The pillar is made to rest on the sedent animal's head and it has fluted and banded shaft, refined necking, the elegant curves, and lotus form with wide abacus. The relief work and architectural features are designed and executed in admirable way.

The monolithic temples called *rathas*, known as 'seven pagodas', are another type of remarkable rock-cut architecture at Mamallapuram. They are named after the five Pandava Brothers and Draupadi, each carved out from a single massive granite stone upon the sea shore. They are complete with all the details of an ordinary temple and stand to-day as undying testimony to the super-quality of Pallava art. These *rathas* are of no great size, the largest measuring only 42 feet long, the widest 35 feet and the tallest 40 feet high. They number eight in all. With the exception of Draupadi's ratha which is the



The Rock-cut Temple at Mahaballipuram, Madras.

smallest, simplest and most finished, others are derived from the Buddhist structure of a Vihar or monastery and chaitya hall or temple. The Dharmaraja *ratha* is the largest. The Bhima *ratha* with its three upper stories is the finest and most interesting of the group. The Ganesh ratha has architectural form known in later Dravidian architecture as *Gopuram*—the gateway. The significant point to note here is that 'these *rathas* formed the originals from which all the *vimanas* in South India were copied and continued to be copied nearly unchanged to a very late period'. (*Gokhale*) These monolithic shrines or *rathas* were of Saivism as in their proximity are images carved in rock, of a lion, an elephant, and a bull, symbolising respectively Durga, Indra and Shiva. Probably each *ratha* was a shrine consecrated to one of the manifestations of Shiva. These *mandapas* and *rathas* are adorned with marvellous figure sculpture. The Pallava sculpture here reveals a finer feeling for form, experienced craftsmanship, a notable sense of restraint and a refined simplicity. Among the sculptures, one large composition on rock has obtained great celebrity. It is cut down from one standing solid rock 98 feet long and 43 feet wide. The scene represented is usually described as the penance of Arjun, but now it is held by art critics and scholars that it represents the Descent of the Ganges. Towards the end of the seventh century the art of excavated ratha or mandapa was given up and the second phase of the Pallava art, the art of structural edifices, was taken up and it occupied the whole of the eighth century. Splendid temples were constructed ; their lofty towers were built tier upon tier, diminishing in size towards a summit, typifing all the wealth, munificence and grandeur of the Pallavas. The most wonderful example of the Pallava structural art is the famous Kailash temple at Kanchi. There the shrine with its sikhara or pyramidal tower and flat-roofed mandapa is surrounded by a series of cells, resembling *Rathas*. The temple of Vaikuntha Perumal at Canjeevaram is another marvellous example of the art. Here the Pallava style of architecture is seen in its most mature form. It is larger and more spacious than the afore-stated Kailash temple. Here the principal parts, the cloisters, portico and sanctuary, instead of being separate buildings, are amalgamated

into one architectural whole. This has produced a unity of conception and considerable architectural merit. To sum up, the Pallava art evolved splendid huge temples of stone. Sometimes the upper part was made of brick. Above the main shrine pyramidal tower was constructed.

The style of Pallava architecture not only set the standard in the South but also largely influenced the architecture of the Indian colonies in the Far East. The Pallava art was transmitted beyond the seas to the countries of south-east Asia like Indonesia 'where its effulgence, reflected in the vast monuments of those civilisations, shone with even greater splendour than in the country of its origin.' (*Percy Brown*) The schools of sculpture which developed out of the Pallava art in Java and Cambodia displayed the high artistic character and the superb quality of the Pallava plastic art. The Khmer sculptures at Angkor Thom and Angkor Vat and the bas-reliefs on the stupa temple of Borobudur owe some of their characteristics to the rock-cut monoliths of Mamallapuram. The characteristic Pallava or Dravidian type of *sikhara* is met with the temples of Java, Cambodia and Annam. But there are important differences between them and the South Indian temples. The pillars that form an important adjunct to the latter are altogether absent in the former. Credit goes to the Pallavas for having kept burning brightly the torch, which kindled by the Buddhists in the early centuries of the Christian era at Amravati, was bequeathed to these Simhavishnu 'lion' kings, Pallavas. Later on its flame glowed with renewed brilliance in the hands of the Chola and subsequent rulers of Southern India. Now we take the opportunity to describe Chola art.

2. *The Chola Art*[1]. The Cholas whose dynastic history began about 900 A. D. lasting for 250 years supplanted the Pallavas. They developed the Dravidian style and almost perfected it under them. The Cholas, who were great builders like the Pallavas, executed works on a most stupendous scale The most laudable undertakings in this direction were their vast fruitful irrigation schemes and works. 'The embankment of

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[1] Refer to *The Cholas* by K. A. Nilakanta Sastri ; *Indian Architecture* (*Hindu and Buddhist*), Chapter XVII by Percy Brown.

the artificial lake built by Rajendra Chola I near his new capital Gangaikonda Cholapuram was sixteen miles in length with stone sluices and channels. Dams composed of huge blocks of dressed stone were thrown across the Kaveri and other rivers.' Chola rulers elaborately and carefully planned and laid out vast cities. The centre of the city was the temple.

The Chola temple architecture has received appreciation for the purity of its artistic traditions. The temple of Koranganatha at Srinivasanalur in the Trichinopoly district is an example of the early temple architecture of the Cholas. Its salient feature is that it has a considerable amount of sculpture on the wall surfaces of the *Vimana* consisting of full-length images of Hindu gods and goddesses installed within recesses. Here is the beginning of voluptuous treatment of the human figure. But the Chola art attained maturity in the two magnificent temples of Tanjore and Gangaikonda Cholapuram, both built in the first quarter of the eleventh century. The great Shiva temple at Tanjore built by Rajaraja the Great about 1011 A. D. is the largest, highest and most ambitious production of the temple-architecture. The main structure of the temple is 180 feet and has a great sikhara or tower consisting of fourteen successive storeys rising to a height of 190 feet. It is crowned by a massive dome consisting of a single block of stone, 25 feet high and weighing about 80 tons. The massive temple building is covered from the base to the top with sculptures and decorative mouldings. The temple is composed of many structures combined axially, such as a Nandi pavilion, a pillared portico and a large assembly hall, all in the centre of a spacious walled enclosure. Unquestionably the finest single creation of the Dravidian craftsmen, the Tanjore temple is a touchstone of Indian architecture as a whole. More graceful but less imposing is the *Subrahmanya* temple in the same city of Tanjore with 'its highly decorated tower, less severe in the outline.' The massive temple erected by Rajendra I (1018-1033) in his new capital Gangikonda-Cholapuram is another imposing work of Chola temple architecture. Its great size, immense walled enclosure, assembly hall containing over 150 pillars, huge *lingam* of solid granite, the tall pyramidal vimana or tower and the delicate

carvings in stone are its striking features. Under the Chola rulers, as these two imposing monuments testify, the architecture of the South attained its culmination.

Another artistic achievement of the Cholas lies in the special Indian plastic art known as the Chola bronzes. The *Nataraja* (dancing Shiva) figures of the period and the images and portraits of the saints and Hindu gods and goddesses have now been recognised as masterpieces of the world.

The Chola art is characterised by a massive grandeur. The huge structures were decorated with minute sculptures involving immense labour and infinite pains. Fergusson very aptly remarked that the Chola artists conceived like giants and finished like jewellers. A new development, which modified Dravidian architecture in later times, was gradually taking place in Chola art. It was the addition of a huge gateway, called a *Gopuram,* to the enclosure of the temple. It attained maturity under the Pandyas (1180-1350).

3. *The Pandya Art and evolution of Gopuram.* The *gopuram,* the temple portal, derived its name from the 'cow-gate' of the Vedic village, afterwards becoming the city-gate and subsequently the monumental entrance to the temple. The main shrine, its *vimana* or *sikhara* were left untouched but pylon-like entrance was introduced into the temple scheme in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries of the Pandya supremacy. Gopuram is an entrance building oblong in plan rising up into a tapering tower of pyramidal shape over 150 feet in height and entered by a rectangular door-way in the centre of its long side. Gradually the *gopurams* came to be multiplied and assumed huge proportions. Ultimately the gigantic gopurams came to occupy the dominant place by their towering splendid height and lavish decoration, while the central shrine of the temple, being less imposing, was completely reduced to comparative insignificance. Such addition of gopuram arrests the attention by increasing emotional appeal. It marks 'the stage of transition between the affluent maturity of the Cholas and the exquisite though extravagant production of Vijayanagar.' (*Percy Brown*) Sundara Pandya Gopuram in the temple of Jamukesvara near Trichinopoly, eastern gopuram of the Chidambaram temple, the gopuram

of the great temple at Kumbhakonam and of Aiyravatesvara at Darasuram are the most characteristic of the period. The gopuram of the great temple at Kumbhakonam is a very magnificent piece of work by itself. But it so completely overshadows the principal shrine that the structure as a whole 'is less pleasing and produces far less artistic effect than might have been reasonably expected.' The outstanding features of Dravidian temple architecture are its two types of tower, the Vimana and the Gopuram. These two represent the final manifestation of two ancient forms and traditions and have attained maturity under the Cholas and the Pandyas.

4. *Madura style : the final phase of the Dravidian style of architecture.* In Madura and certain other towns in the extreme peninsula the Dravidian style assumed its final form under the Nayak dynasty. The Madura style aimed at the revival and continuation of the building procedure of the Pandyas which consisted in improving and extending the existing shrines. Temples were now extended by erecting a high boundary wall around the temple, an intervening space was left all round to provide a wide open courtyard called *prakaram.* Sometimes there were seven concentric ractangular enclosures each with its entrance gopurams. These open courtyards or *prakarams,* enclosed within hall walls, provided ample space for the construction of such buildings as store rooms, pillared halls, subsidiary shrines etc. Within the outermost enclosure there are two important structures, one a hypostyle hall and the other a square tank of water in the centre for religious abulations. The tank is usually surrounded on four sides by a colonnade with pillared cloisters and steps running down to the water. The most famous temple of Madura style are the Shiva and Minakshi temples at Madura, the Vishnu temple at Srirangam near Trichinopoly, Shiva temple at Chidambaram and the temple of Rameswaram. In fact the Dravidian style or the south architecture reached its climax in the seventeenth century temples of Rameswaram and Madura. The corridors at Rameswaram, each 700 feet long and carved out of solid granite, are dignified and impressive; but the great hall at Madura, with its pillared hippographs and other mythological monsters, in which the sculptor's imagination

has run riot, is bewilderingly grotesque. On the whole one is struck 'with awe by the sight of the magnificent massive gigantic temples at Madura, Srirangam, Rameswaram and other places in the far south, with successive enclosures, long courts with a bewildering maze of buildings, thousand-pillared halls, and long vistas of covered colonnades that seem to fade into distance.'

The Upper Deccan. North India and the Far South had evolved two independent styles of architecture. Between these two lay the Deccan table-land. There both the styles were used freely. The Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas who ruled this part were great splendid builders. In the vicinity of the Chalukya capital Badami, there are a number of cave-temples. They are dedicated to Brahmanical gods, and contain many fine images and pieces of good sculptures. Among them the figures of Vishnu seated on the body of the great Snake Sesa or Ananta, the *Varaha* (the Boar incarnation), the *Nara Simha* (Man-Lion incarnation) and the *Vamana* (Dwarf incarnation) are most famous as they indicate the development of sculpture in the Deccan. Then there are many stone temples at Badami and at many other places constructed in the ordinary style. Most of them display the Pallava or Dravidian style of the south. The same style was also largely adopted by the Rashtrakuta rulers and 'the world famous Kailash temple at Ellora is a marvellous specimen of the Dravidian style.' Ellora is situated near Aurangabad in Hyderabad State and it has three distinct groups of cave temples—Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain.[1] The Brahmanical-Saivite group of rock-cut temples is the most interesting and impressive. The Kailash temple of this group is not only the most stupendous single work of art but as an example of rock-architecture it is unrivalled. It displays remarkable imagination, the unstinted labour and the marvellous sculpture. Percy Brown remarks that Kailash temple is 'an illustration of one of those rare occasions when men's minds, hearts and hands work in unison towards the consummation of a supreme ideal.' This temple was constructed by the Rashtrakuta king Krishna I

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1 For details refer to *History of Indian Architecture* by Fergusson, Vol. I, *Rock Temples of Ellora* by J. Burgess, *Indian Architecture* by P. Brown, Vol. I, Chapter XV.



Trimurti, Elephanta Caves, (Bombay).

(757-783). The masons demarcated an entire hill-side and separated it from a long range of mountains. Then they cut out of the living rock a huge temple. It was excavated from top downwards. The main shrine is supported on the backs of elephants which are carved out in a life-like manner. The temple has a Dravidian *Sikhara* and it is elaborately carved with fine sculpture. Besides the main temple there are the entrance gateway, an intermediate *Nandi* shrine, and the cloisters of five subsidiary shrines surrounding the courtyard. Then the caves are excavated in the sides of the hills round the temple. They contain extensive halls decorated with finely wrought images of several Brahmanical divinities. There is the *Dasavatara* gallery displaying the Divine incarnations. It is a monument of great dramatic force emerging out of inert matter. On the whole the Kailash temple at Ellora is an expression of exalted religious emotion. Dr. R. C. Majumdar remarks that it is a splendid achievement of art and has been always looked on as one of the architectural marvels of the world. Within a short distance of the Kailash temple, the hill contains several rock-cut caves resembling those of Nasik, Karle and Ajanta. Among these two Jain caves, the Indra Sabha and the Jagannath Sabha, which have a series of shrines with images of Jain tirthankars in the niches, excel in rich elaborate carvings and perfected finish. To sum up, in Ellora the great tradition of the excavated rock-cut architecture finds its ultimate fruition. It is at Ellora that 'the transition from the excavated monastery to the stimulated structural temple is complete.' (*Dr. B. G. Gokhale*) Henceforth the rock-architecture declined and eventually died out. However, the entire sculpture in Ellora has transformed solid rocks into the marvellous figures of cosmic force and purpose. It is awesome but graceful and stretches out in timeless space. Contemporary with these is the Shiva cave-temple carved from the hill side on the picturesque island of Elephanta[1] or Gharpuri near Bombay. It contains many fine sculptures the most striking being the gigantic three-sided Shiva, which represents the culmination of the excellent art of creating liveform

Rock Temples of Elephanta by Burgess.

out of motionless mass. This *trimurti* has combined proportionate grandeur with delicay of expression.

The Mysore Plateau

The Hoysala rulers who succeeded the later Chalukya kings and ruled over the entire Mysore Plateau in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries A. D. evolved a new style of architecture. It is said that they inherited the art-traditions of their predecessors, the Gangas, during whose reign the famous colossal image of the Jain saint Gomateshwar was constructed and placed on the top of a hillock at Sravana Belgola. It is more than 56 feet in height and is a marvel of execution and conception. Some scholars hold that the Hoysalas continued the Chalukya style which reaches its climax under them. Of the many noble temples of the period, the most notable are those erected at Somnathpur, Belpur and Halebid or Dwarasamudra. These temples are not sqaure but polygonal or star-shaped. Their essential characteristics are the richly carved 'high bases or plinths which follow all the windings of the temple and thus offer a huge length of vacant space to be elaborately carved with sculptures. The *Sikhara* is pyramidal but low, and may be regarded as a modified type of the Darvidian style.'[1] The Somnath temple erected by Vinaditya Ballal in about 1043 A.D. is the earliest specimen, but the best example of the Hoysala art is the famous Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid. 'It stands on a terrace, about five or six feet high... The entire height is covered with a succession of eleven running friezes of elephants, tigers, scrolls, horsemen and celestial beasts and birds.' The entire surface of each frieze is covered with elaborate sculptures. The Hoysalesvara temple 'contains one of the most marvellous exhibition of human labour to be found even in the patient East.'

South India and Islam

Vijayanagar Empire (1336-1556)[2]. In the beginning of the fourteenth century Malik Kafur raided southern India and destroyed the last Hindu kingdom there. The Kakateya

1 *An Advanced History of India* by Majumdar and others, p. 252.

2 Refer to *A Forgotten Empire* by Havell ; *Social and Political History of the Vijayanagar Empire* by Saletore.

dynasty of Warangal had been destroyed and the Devagiri existed no more. But the chaotic conditions that followed Malik Kafur's raid provided opportunity for that historic unity of South India to assert itself and in 1336 under two leaders, Harihar and Bukka, a new state was organised which came to be known to history as Vijayanagar. It became the successor to the traditions of the Chalukyas, Hoysalas, Pallavas and Cholas. The Vijayanagar Empire continued for over three hundred years, a mighty and impregnable bulwark against Muslim invasion and disappeared from history onlyby themiddle of the seventeenth century after Shivaji had taken up the cause of Hinduism. The establishment of Muslim power—Bahmani State in the Deccan plateau led to its continuous fight with Vijayanagar Empire and consequently Vijayanagar Emperors were not allowed to forget for a moment that the historic mission of their state was to defend South India and Hindu culture and civilisation from Muslim conquest. It was but for the strength of Vijayanagar that the Hinduism and Hindu culture would have been trampled underfoot as the case has been in the Gangetic Valley. The greatest monarch of the Vijayanagar Empire was Krishnadeva Raya (1509-1550) under whom the power of Vijayanagar reached its zenith. He was not only an enterprising conqueror and successful administrator but an accomplished scholar and generous patron of learning. 'He represented that type of benevolent despotism which had become the traditional political organisation in India.' After him though the Muslim rulers of the Deccan formed an alliance and defeated the army of Vijayanagar in 1565 at Talikotta, Vijayanagar continued to be the centre of Hindu culture and civilisation. The great military disaster of Talikotta brought the end of a dynasty and demoralised for a short time the resistance of the people, but it failed to extinguish the national spirit of an old and powerful empire. The strength and greatness of Vijayanagar Empire were not based on dynasties but on the national feeling of the Hindus of the South India and their unflinching determination to resist the Muslims. The very military organisation of Vijayanagar also reflected the primary purpose of maintaining a successful resistance against the Muslim encroachment.

South India under the Vijayanagar Emperors attained a remarkable state of prosperity. Foreign travellers like Nicolo Conti (1420), Abdur Razzaq (1442-48), and Edorado Barbosa who visited India during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have left glowing accounts of the economic prosperity, wealth and splendour of Vijayanagar. Agriculture flourished well in different parts of the kingdom and the State pursued successfully a wise irrigation policy. The main industries which flourished there related to textiles, mining and metallurgy. The most important of the minor industries was perfumery. Industrial life had developed so much that craftsmen's and merchants' guilds played an important part in the economic life of the people. There were various types of gold, silver and copper coins in circulation. Though the upper well-to-do classes enjoyed a high standard of living, 'the common people groaned under the weight of heavy taxation.' The most remarkable and salient feature in the economic condition of the realm was commerce, inland, coastal and overseas. The most important port on the western or Malabar Coast was Calicut. It had commercial relations with Europe and the Far East. According to the Persian envoy Abdur Razzaq, the Empire "possessed 300 seaports." 'It had commercial relations with the islands in the Indian Ocean, the Malaya Archipelago, Burma, China, Arabia, Persia, South Africa, Abyssinia and Portugal.' With the arrival of the Portuguese as the carriers of world trade, the markets of Europe were opened to the products of India and the produce of the West flowed into Indian ports continuously. We have epigraphic evidence to prove that the monarchs of Vijayanagar maintained fleets and the people were well acquainted with the art of ship-building before the advent of the Portugese in India. The Vijayanagar Empire had successfully solved the significant problem of ocean transport.

Women generally held a high position in society. The learned authors of the book *An Advanced History of India* point out that instances of the active part the women took in the political, social and literary life of the country are not rare. Besides being trained in wrestling, handling swords and shields, music and other fine arts, some of them received a fair amount

of literary education. They acted as accountants, kitchen supervisors and night-guards in the palaces. Sati and polygamy were recognised common practices and child marriage was the usual social custom ; the practice of exorbitant dowries was greatly prevalent. The system of slavery was common. Many of the slavers were insolvent debtors.

The Brahmans exercised a predominent influence not merely in social and religious matters but also in the political affairs of the state. They were very honest, talented and good at accounts but unfit for hard labour. There were no rigid regulations in matters of diet. In addition to fruits, vegetables and oil, meat of all kinds, except that of oxen and cows, for which people had great veneration, was taken by the peple. It seems that people used animal food freely ; but the Brahmans never killed or ate any living thing. Many bloody sacrifices were practised in the kingdom. Sheep and buffaloes were sacrificed. On the last day of the famous "nine days festival", 250 buffaloes and 4,500 sheep were slaughtered. The nobles were extremely rich and luxurious. Duel was common among the masses. The royal processions and festivals were accompanied by great splendour. All forms of worships were tolerated.

The Vijayanagar Empire, being the centre of Hindu cultural revival, has to its credit brilliant cultural and artistic achievements. This Empire served a high historical purpose by acting as the champion of Hindu religion and culture against the aggressions of the Muslims in Southern India. The Emperors were patrons of all languages Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada, and under their fostering care some of the finest pieces of literature were produced. The famous commentator of the Vedas, Madhvacharya and his brother Sayana, who occupy a prominent place in the history of medieval Sanskrit literature, flourished during the early days of Vijayanagar. They were closely associated with the Vijayanagar court. The reign of Krishnadeva Raya marked 'the dawn of a new era in the literary history of South India. Himself a scholar, musician and poet, he loved to gather around him poets, philosophers, and religious teachers.' The Raya himself was a writer of distinction in Telugu and his *Amuktamalyada* is considered a

classic. He also wrote five Sanskrit works. In his court flourished 'the *Astadiggajas*', 'the eight elephants' (famous poets) who supported the world of Telugu literature. His poet-laureate, Peddana, is still considered one of the fathers of Telugu. Successive queens of Vijayanagar dynasty figure as poets and Ganga Devi, the authoress of *Madhura Vijayam* and Tirumalamba Devi, the authoress of *Varadambika Parinayam* deserve special mention. There were also authors among the petty chiefs and relatives of the emperors. Poets and religious teachers were even patronised by the rulers of the Aravidu dynasty. It is a matter of pride that the Telugu literature fiourished under them with 'reinforced vigour'. Many works on music, dancing, drama, grammar, logic, philosophy, etc. received encouragement from the Vijayanagar Emperors and their ministers many of whom were great scholars and writers. They built schools and colleges for the extension and promotion of Sanskrit language and generously gave handsome stipends to the deserving persons for the encouragement of Sanskrit and Telugu literatures. Renowned poets and authors flourished at their court. Foreign visitors have recorded that their court was held with great dignity and show, and was well attended by nobles, learned priests, astrologers and musicians. In short, Vijayanagar empire was a "synthesis of south Indian culture."

Epigraphic and literary evidence show that there was no religious persecution in Vijayanagar Empire. The Emperors of Vijayanagar were of pious disposition and devoted to Dharma. But they were not fanatics. They were liberal and tolerent towards the prevailing four sects, Saiva, Buddha, Vaishnava and Jain, and even alien creeds, Christian, Jewish and Moorish.

The Emperors of Vijayanagar were great patrons of fine arts. They were great builders who felt great delight and interest in spending money most liberally on constructing works of public utility such as long roads, large tanks, reservoirs, lakes and other useful works of irrigation and water supply as well as on building 'gorgeous palaces and temples decorated with all the resources of art, both sculpture and painting.' The ruins of Vijayanagar, the old capital of the Empire proclaim that there evolved, under the patronage of its emperors, a distinct style

of architecture, sculpture and painting by native artists. The religious zeal of the Emperors found expression in splendid temples that have been described by western experts as perfect specimens of Hindu architecture. The famous Hazara temple, built during the reign of Krishnadeva Raya is "one of the most perfect specimens of Hindu temple architecture in existence." (*Longhurst*) Another fine example of Vijayanagar style is the temple of Vithalasvami, the gigantic granite monolith of Narasimha. As Fergusson points out it "shows the extreme limit in florid magnificence to which the style advanced." The architecture was a great success and it displayed great art, strength and beauty. The art of sculpture and painting also attained a high degree of excellence, and they were wonderfully improved. The art of music swiftly developed. Some new works on music were also produced.

The Bahmani Kingdom. In 1347, during the reign of Mohammad Tughlaq, Husen Gangu Bahmani set up an independent state with its capital Gulbarga in the Deccan. It came to be known in history as the Bahmani kingdom (1347-1482). At the height of its power it stretched from sea and included Hyderabad, the Northern Circars of Madras and a part of the Bombay Presidency. Later on in 1482 five kingdoms—Bidar, Golkonda, Berar, Ahmadnagar and Bijapur—arose from the ruins of the Bahmani Sultanate and prevailed with varying fortunes until they were absorbed by one another or by the Mughal Empire. Of the fourteen kings of the Bahmani kingdom only six died natural death, the rest were either murdered, deposed or succumbed to excessive drinking. Another feature of the political history of the kingdom is its long drawn war with their Hindu neighbours of Vijayanagar with fluctuating success. 'The internal politics of kingdom were dominated by two rival factions of nobles, *viz.*, the "Deccanese" and the "foreigners" and this fact more than anything else accounts for its ultimate dismemberment.'

The historical importance of the Bahmani kingdom lies in the fact that it held the central position which bridged the North and the South. Some of the Bahmani kings, though religious devout, were not oppressive or intolerent towards their Hindu

subjects. Both Jainism and Hinduism flourished as numerous temples of the period bear witness. Education and learning mostly Persian and Arabic flourished and several schools and colleges were founded where free education was provided to those who desired it—mostly Muslims. Mosques served as places of learning. The Sultans were great lovers of art and architecture. They founded cities and built mosques and fortresses. Their capital was a magnificent city with beautiful parks and promenades. The royal palaces were stately, splendid and spacious buildings containing extensive and lofty halls. Their apartments were furnished with windows and arches of beautiful designs and execution. The mosques at Gulbarga and Bidar are splendid monuments of the architecture of the period. The city of Bidar is highly praised by contemporary observers as a place full of beautiful and spacious buildings. The Jam-i-Masjid at Gulbarga, the Chand Minar at Daulatabad and the College of Mahmud Gawan are some of the most beautiful buildings erected by the Bahmani Sultans which show their remarkable love of architecture. Meadows Taylor describes them as expressions of grandeur and design and of tasteful and magnificent execution. The fortresses of Gawligrah, Nernala Parenda and Panhala, several irrigation works, the tombs of the various kings, Hasan Mohammad Shah, Mujahid Shah and others, are notable specimens of the Bahmani art.

To sum up, South India has a certain clearly different story to tell from the rest of India. It had continuity, stability and unity of its own culture from the pre-Aryan age. The individuality of its culture is still very strongly felt. The southern culture with all its aspects continued to evolve inspite of the dynastic changes in political sphere. It is true that the present culture of the south is a synthesis of the Tamil and Aryan cultures, but it we can recall of anything in Indian art and architecture, literature, social institutions, indigenous in the sense of being pre-Aryan, it is found in the South. Shree Sundaram Pillai, in his book *Tamilian Antiquary*, remarks, "India, south of the Vindhyas—the Peninsular India—still continues to be India proper. Here, the bulk of the people retain their pre-Aryan features, their pre-Aryan languages, their pre-Aryan social insti-

tutions. Even here, the process of Aryanisation has gone indeed too far to leave it easy to the historian to distinguish the native warp from the foreign woof. But if there is anywhere any chance of such successful disentanglement, it is in the South and the further South we go, the larger does the change grow."

Chapter 12

The Age of Segregation, Disruption and Disintegration (600-1200 A. D.)

The sixth century not a period of disruption. After the collapse of the Gupta Empire northern India again became a congeries of small states. The Huns ruled over the Punjab, Rajasthan and Malwa ; and there was another small kingdom between the Sutlej and the Jamuna known as the kingdom of Thaneswar. Saurashtra and a part of Malwa were organised into a powerful kingdom by the Maitrakas, the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh or Uttar Pradesh formed an independent sovereign kingdom under Mukharis and the Vakatakas had recovered their position of ascendancy. During this period of political turmoil and disruption one alien power, represented by the Hun kings, Tormana and his son Mihiragula, ruled within the country. But a confederacy of the Hindu Princes, led by Yasodharman of Malwa, defeated this power and banished its ruler to the valley of Kashmir. A redeeming feature of this political disruption in the sixth century is that it did not react adversely on the Hindu culture. The Vakatakas, the later Guptas, and the Maukharis in their own territories carried the tradition of the Empire. The University of Nalanda was gradually coming to acquire international fame. The saint Sthiramati, and eminent scholar Dharmapala adorned it. Bharavi, Kumardass (of *Janakiharan*) and Dandian among the poets, and Visakhadatta and perhaps the author of *Kaumudi Mahotsava* among the dramatists lived in the sixth century which witnessed the perfection of classical

Sanskrit. Indian mathematics, astronomy and medicine saw much development and philosophy, logic, 'Mimansa' and exegetics seem to have received special attention in the sixth century. Buddhist and Hindu system of logic enjoyed their golden age in this century. Vernacular literature developed and Prakrit evolved into a literary language during this time and we have the grammars of Prakritic languages that enabled Rajasekhara and others to make of Prakrit a great classical literature in the next century. The Brahman leaders of the society not only maintained but seem to have further strengthened their hold on the minds of the people. They came to occupy the unique position of advisers and counsellors of the ruling princes, reorganised the structure and regulated the order of the society and brought into its fold many foreigners including the Huns themselves. All this compels one to abandon the old view that the sixth century was a period of anarchy and disruption and the age of Harsha that followed was a last glow. In fact the sixth century was a germinal period which, apart from its own very notable achievements in every field, sowed the seeds of later development.

The Age of Harsha[1]

As noted above many petty kingdoms arose on the ruins of the Gupta Empire and disintegration followed in the course of next fifty years; but under Harsha (606-647) these disintegrating units were brought under the central authority and the task of rejuvenation of national life which was suspended due to the invasion of the barbarious Huns was resumed. The greatest achievement of Harsha was the restoration of the political unity of India by establishing a strong empire in Northern India. His advance in the Deccan was checked by Pulakesin II, the Chalukya ruler of the Deccan. He efficiently governed his empire and unlike other kings personally supervised the working of its administrative machinery. He was a great lover and patron of learning and a religious and charitable man. Himself a poet and dramatist and the author of three plays, he ex-

[1] For Harsha, refer to *History of Kanauj to the Muslim Conquest* by Dr. R. S. Tripathi ; *Harsacharita* (English translation by Cowell and Thomas) ; *On Yuan Chwang's Travels* by Watters.

tended state patronage to men of letters like Bana, the author of *Harsha Charita* and *Kadambari* and Jayasena, a man of encyclopaedic learning. His court was famous for philosophers, poets, dramatists and painters. At first he was a Hindu but later on adopted Buddhism whose cause he served in many ways. He convened the famous Kanauj Assembly, attended by the learned scholars of various sects and creeds, endowed Buddhist monasteries and constructed many *stupas*. His quinquennial assemblies at Prayag, where he distributed all his wealth among the Buddhists, the Brahmans and the poor people, after performing religious rites of Buddhism and Hinduism, stand unparalleled in the history of the world. His large hearted liberality also expressed itself in his manifold works of public utility. In all the high ways of the towns and villages throughout India he erected rest houses, provided them with food and drink and stationed there physicians with medicines for travellers and poor persons round about to be given without any stint. As a king he had high and lofty ideals of duty and service. In his zeal for the performance of good deeds he knew no rest and 'even forgot to eat and sleep'.

In his time the learned Chinese scholar and monk, Hiuen Tsang, visited India in 630 and remained here till 643 and has given us a fairly elaborate account of the religious, social and economic conditions of India.[1] Peshawar, Taxila and Patliputra, according to Hiuen Tsang, were in ruins. Kanauj, the Imperial capital, had taken the place of Patliputra. Prayag was another important town where Harsha used to hold his quinquennial assemblies. It was one of the great nerve centres of Hinduism. Banaras, another centre of Hinduism, was adorned with innumerable temples. Brahmanism like Jainism and Buddhism had the distinct feature of image worship. *Aditya* (Sun), Shiva and Vishnu were the popular gods and their images were installed in the temples where they were worshipped with elaborate rituals. These Hindu temples in grandeur far surpassed even the sacred religious structures of Buddhism and Jainism. Brahmanism of this age was noted for its numerous schools of philosophy and variety of the sects of

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1 For details see *Life of Hiuen Tsang* by Beal.

ascetics ; followers of Kapil and Kanad, *Vedanti*, theistic and *Lokayats* were the chief sects of philosophers whereas *Keshlunjakas* (those who uprooted the hair on head), *Pashupatas*, *Pancharatrikas*, *Bhagawat*, *Jutika* etc., were the main sects of the ascetics. These sects differed widely in their dress, beliefs, rituals, meditation and purificatory ceremonies and each of these tried to discover truth in its own way. With the revival of Hinduism the old centres of Buddhism had all fallen into ruin. Sravasti, Vaisali and Kapilvastu were now reduced to small villages with a decaying population. Buddhism was showing signs of decay as contrasted with Brahmanism which was gradually establishing its old dominance. Many ascetic sects and schools of philosophy were established and were a proof of vitality of Brahmanism. Hinyan and Mahayan were the two principal sects of Buddhism. Besides these two, there were eighteen other sects which differed from each other in many ways. However, gradually Buddhism was being assimilated by the neo-Brahmanical religion known as Hinduism. Like Buddhism Jainism was not popular. Vaishali, Paundra Vardhan and Samtat were the principal centres of Jainism. The Shwetambar sect of the Jains had gained considerable popularity in this age.

As regards social conditions, there were four *Varnas*—Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Each *Varna* had its its own castes and sub-castes. The first two *Varnas* were reputed for their cleanliness and purity. Persons following unclean professions like those of butchers, hunters, fishermen and scavengers had to live outside the four walls of the city. Even when their work brought them within the limits of the city they would sneak along on the left as they went about in the houses. The dress of an average man was very simple and plain and it involved little or no tailoring work. The men wore a strip of cloth round the waist and upto the armpits leaving the shoulders bare. The women wore a long robe which covered their both shoulders and fell down loose. During the winter close-fitting jackets were also worn. Gold ornaments like armlets, rings, bracelets and necklaces were freely put on by both the sexes. As regards physical and

personal hygiene, people were pure of themselves and not from compulsion. Before meal they used to have a wash, the fragments and remains were not served up again ; the food utensils were not passed on ; the utensils that were of pottery or wood were thrown away after use, but the metallic ones—those made of gold, silver, copper and iron—were used again after cleaning. This was a new element in the evolution of Indian culture. The common food comprised milk, butter, sugar, rice parched grain and vegetables. Onions and garlic were little used, and people who ate them were ostracized. Flesh diet was forbidden. The caste ruled the social structure. Women of the higher castes obseived no purdah. The girls were married at an early age, but there was no widow marriage and the practice of *Sati* prevailed. Harsha's own mother died as a sati. Female education was restricted to higher classes only. 'Benevolent institutions on the Asokan model, for the benefit of the travellers, the poor, the sick were established throughout the empire. Rest-houses (*Dharmsalas*) were built in both the towns and rural parts, and provided with food and drink, physicians being stationed at them to supply medicine to the necessitous without stint.'[1] Harsha constructed Buddhist monasteries or *Vihars*, charity houses and the royal lodges where everyday viands were provided for 1000 Buddhist monks and 500 Brahmans. With regard to ordinary people the Chinese pilgrim says, "Although they are naturally light-minded yet they are upright and honourable. In matters they are without craft, in administering justice they are considerate. They are not deceitful or treacherous in their conduct and are faithful in their oaths and promises, in their behaviour there is much gentleness and sweetness." As regards material prosperity of the country, people were rich and prosperous. The centres of prosperity were towns. Silk, cotton and woollen cloths were manufactured. Industrial life was organised on the basis of large corporations and guilds. Hiuen Tsang's account of Kanauj and other prosperous towns gives us an indication of the material prosperity of the age. The splendid

Early History of India by Smith, p. 347.

royal palaces of Kanauj and magnificent *Vihars* of Nalanda were the finest specimens of the architecture of the age.

People were well educated in this age. The Buddhist monasteries were not only the strongholds of religion but education too. There were many monasteries at Kanauj, Gaya, Munger, Jalandhar, Manipur etc. where renowned scholars were providing education to the people. The University of Nalanda[1] which reached its high water-mark at this period was an educational centre of international fame. It was well renowned for its cosmopolitan and catholic character. In Nalanda education was not confined to religious subjects nor it was connected with one religion or sect. Not only the Hindu and Buddhist literatures in all their branches but even other subjects like logic, grammar, medicine, *Sankhya* philosophy, etc. were well studied. Discourses were given from 100 pulpits every day. Nalanda was the embodiment of the highest ideal of education of the age. The splendid buildings of the Nalanda University, its extensive curriculum, unique educational atmosphere, gatherings of students coming from near and distant places diffusion of knowledge by way of discussions, debates, lectures, meditation and above all the noble character and profound scholarship of the teachers and taught were the pride of this age. It is not every age that can boast of such grand educational system. Hiuen Tsang has left a detailed account of this university. In addition to Nalanda, Taxila and Ujjain were other centres of learning ; the former was renowned for its medical school and the latter for its secular learning including mathematics and astronomy. Kanchi, Valabhi and Vikramshila were also as great and famous as Nalanda.

The seventh century in India is said to be the Age of Harsha. His reign marks an important epoch in Indian history. Although his empire was less extensive, less lasting and less powerful than even Gurajara-Pratihar empire, yet he revived the imperial idea and gave northern India semblance of unity after the dissolution of the Gupta Empire. Secondly, his reign marks the continuation of the cultural and religious affinity

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[1] *University of Nalanda* by H. D. Sankalia ; *Nalanda and its Epigraphic Material* by Hirananda Sastri.

between India and China which dates back as early as the time of Kanishka if not earlier. Thirdly, his reign is a landmark in the development of indigenous education ; India distributed her knowledge through the world famous Nalanda university. Fourthly, it also marks a distinct advance in Sanskrit scholarship and literary development, as the literary outburst of this period shows. Lastly, Harsha himself embodies the time-honoured tradition of Indian Kingship in being at once a mighty emperor and also a benefactor of his subjects.

The Rajput Period 700-1200 *A. D.* The death of Harsha was a signal for the general disruption and disintegration of his empire and India again lost her political unity. The period from the middle of the seventh century to the end of the 12th century is marked by the rise and growth of Rajput power over northern India. It is, therefore, called the period of Rajput ascendancy or briefly the Rajput period. The whole of India was disintegrated into a large number of small independent kingdoms set up throughout the country, each under a Rajput ruler. Nearly all the kingdoms were governed by families or clans which for ages past have been called Rajputs. The significance of the Rajputs does not consist merely in their political supremacy for centuries together. It were the Rajputs who were the defenders of Hindu faith, zealous patrons of Hindu culture and the protagonists of Hindu traditions and customs. Tod pays an eloquent tribute to the Rajputs when he remarks—"What nation on earth would have maintained the semblace of civilisation, the spirit or the customs of their forefathers, during so many centuries of overwhelming depression, but one of such singular character as the Rajputs ? Rajasthan exhibits the sole example in the history of mankind, of a people withstanding every outrage barbarity can inflict or human nature sustain, and bent to the earth, yet rising buoyant from the pressure and making calamity a whetstone to courage." It is the undying glory of the Rajputs that they organised resistance to foreign invasions during the days of Muslim conquest and kept up the torch of Indian culture burning with continuous heroism for nearly four centuries. The ancient Hindu period comes to an end with the death of Harsha.in the

middle of the seventh century and medieval period of Indian history begins. The history of India now becomes a wearisome chronicle of a number of states which were continually being formed, dissolved and formed again. Hence it was the age of segregation, disruption and disintegration.

The important Rajput kingdoms[1] that have played a conspicuous part in the political and cultural history of India were as follows :—

Kanauj. The city of Kanauj continued to be the Imperial city of Hindustan and the kingdom of Kanauj had three well-marked periods in her history (1) of fifty years under the great Yasovarman, (2) of 200 years under the Pratihars, and (3) of 100 years under Gharwaras. During the first period, Kanauj provided a rallying centre for the revived Hinduism or neo-Brahmanism and produced reformers like Kumaril Bhatt and poets like Bhavabhuti. During the second period it held in check the forces of disruption and disintegration and also successfully checked the expansion of Arabs from Sind further eastward. The third period witnessed the waning glory of Kanauj. Towards the end of this period it lost its position as a seat of mighty Hindu power when its ruler Jaichanda was defeated by Mohammad Ghori in 1194.

Bundelkhand. Utilising the opportunity provided by the declining power of the Pratihars of Kanauj, their feudatories, who were governing the regions between the rivers Jamuna and Narbada, became independent sovereigns and set up their own ruling dynasties. They were the Chandelas of Jejakabhukti or Bundelkhand and the Kalachuries of Chedi or Baghelkhand. Of these two Chandelas proved to be more powerful and their Bundelkhand became a land of monuments and splendid buildings both religious and secular under Maharaja Dhanga Chandela. He joined the Hindu Confederacy against Subuktgin. The last sovereign of this dynasty was deprived of his power by Sultan Kutbuddin Aibak in 1203.

Gujrat. After the overthrow of the dynasties of Valabhi and the Chavadas the whole of Gujrat was brought under the sway

[1] For details see *Dynastic History of Northern India*, Vol. II, by H. C. Ray.

by Mulraja Chalukya (961-997 A.D.). Taking advantage of the declining power of the Pratihars of Kanauj, the Chalukyas extended and strengthened their dominions. The kingdom of Gujrat flourished well under its Chalukya rulers and many centres of trade, commerce and culture were fairly well developed in western India during the three hundred years of their rule. The Chalukyas in their turn were succeeded by the Baghelas and the Muslims wrested Gujrat from Karnadeva Baghela in 1304 A.D.

Malwa. Another powerful kingdom was that of the Parmars of Malwa in modern Madhya Bharat, region of Madhya Pradesh. Although as soldiers and warriors the Parmars yielded to none of their contemporaries, 'yet their contributions of permanent value are to be found in domain of science and literature.' Both Munja and Bhoja were great liberal patrons of fine arts and literature. Bhoja, like Harsha and Samudragupta, was a versatile genius. He is famous as an ideal king in Indian literature. Dhar, his capital, was a flourishing centre of Sanskrit studies in the Rajput age.

Ajmer and Delhi. The Chauhan Rajputs established their independent kingdoms at Ajmer and Delhi. Vigraharaja was the powerful ruler among the Chauhans of Ajmer. But Prithviraj Chauhan of Delhi was the most powerful in the dynasty and was the last Hindu Emperor of India. He fought stubbornly against Ghori the Muslim invader though his final defeat in 1192 led to the establishment of Muslim political power in India.

Mewar. The Sisodia kingdom of Mewar (Chittor) had played an important part in the political and military history of India. The Sisodias had a proud military record to their credit. The renowned Rajput heroes like Bapa Rawal, Rana Sanga and Rana Pratap all belonged to the house of Mewar.

Bengal and Bihar. The Palas of Bengal and Bihar were contemporaries of the Pratiharas of Kanauj. Dharmpala and Devapala were the most famous among the Palas. The rule of the Palas which extended over four centuries 'proved a source of blessing for eastern India so far as the religious and cultural progress of the country was concerned.' The Palas liberally

patronised Buddhism and it was in the Buddhist monasteries or Vihars of eastern India that art and learning was nursed in the medieval age in Bengal. The Palas were succeeded by the Senas, probably Brahmans from the south. Vijaysena of this dynasty reorganised the caste system and sent several missions to spread Tantric Hinduism in the neighbouring countries. Laxmanasena, the last ruler of the dynasty was made to quit Bengal by the Muslims in 1199 A. D.

Punjab. In the tenth century we come across a very powerful kingdom in the Punjab with Bhatinda as its capital. Its three kings Jai Pala, Anand Pala and Trilochan Pala offered a stout resistance to the Muslim invaders.

Kamrupa or Assam. The old kingdom of Assam or Kamrupa was always outside the Mauryan, Gupta and Harsha Empires, but it was a subordinate state to all these empires in turn. Later on a foreign dynasty set up by Salastambha began to rule there and it lasted for 800 years. The Muslims were not successful in conquering it. From the very beginning Kamrupa resisted the advent of Buddhism. It has been mainly a Hindu preserve, but a strange form of Hinduism known as Shaktism developed there. The most important temple of the Shaktas is at Kamakhya.

Kashmir. One of the earliest kings of Kashmir was Chandragupta. But the most powerful king of Kashmir was Lalitaditya (724-760 A. D.) who was a mighty conqueror and extended his sway far and wide. Under him Kashmir became the most powerful kingdom in Northern India. He was a great builder. The famous Martand Temple dedicated to the Sun god was built by him. Kashmir was famous as a centre of Sanskrit learning. It became Buddhist but later on Buddhism was supplanted by Brahmanic Hinduism.

Culture in Rajput Period

Hindu Cultural Life before the advent of Islam. Some of the salient features of the Rajput period were as follows :—

1. *Absence of external danger and its effects.* K. M. Panikkar points out that one of the most remarkable facts which has influenced the cultural life for over five hundred years from Toramana to Mahmud of Gazani is the absence of any

external danger. India was free from the threat of foreign aggression. Except for Sind which was occupied by the Khalifas of Bagdad for some years, India enjoyed unbroken immunity from external aggressions and troubles. External vigilence, which is the price of freedom, had weakened so much that the Hindus of the seventh to eleventh centuries had completely lost the sense of patriotism and national honour which develop only under the stimulus of external danger and aggression. This was a significant result.

Another consequence of the absence of any external aggression and threat was the consuming arrogance of the Indians. This is evidenced by the accounts of Alberuni who notes—"The Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no science like theirs." The Hindus cultivated the feeling that their country was ordained by God to remain safe and that no foreigner could reach it. Such a feeling of peace could not but weaken the springs of national greatness. People now failed to subordinate their individual material interests to the idea of general welfare and prosperity.

2. *Absence of foreign contact and its deadening effect.* Another most remarkable fact about this period is that India was completely isolated from the rest of the world. The overland cultural and commercial contacts with the west and China had dried up as a result of changed political conditions in Central Asia. The mastery of the sea-route passed over from the Tamil Kingdoms to the Sailendra monarchs of Java and Sumatra. No known country was isolated socially and politically from the rest of the world for such long time as India was for five hundred years. This had far reaching effects. Completely insular in ideas without any knowledge of what was taking place in the rest of the world, the Indian people ceased to grow.

3. *Cultural decadence.* 'Civilisation and culture of the Indians became decadent and inbred for lack of fertilising contacts with dissimilar cultures.' This decadence was clearly visible in every sphere. Society became static, the caste-system became very rigid, and in literature "the Kavya style degenerated into a vain parade of futile learning while the restraint, poise and delicacy of Kalidasa gave place to extravagance in conceit

and artificialities in language."[1] In architecture also the taste had degenerated to a great extent. In place of the magnificent and marvellous sculptures of the earlier splendid temples we have the representation on stone of moral perverties which exhibits the utter demoralisation of the higher classes. Degeneration had crept in society also. Ibn Batuta remarks that in this age prostitution was not held in discredit. There was a great disparity of wealth in society. Religion also degenerated. Everything—flesh, fish, wine and women—was permitted in worship and religious ceremonies. The *mathas* established by Shankaracharya became the centres of the luxurious life. The system of *Devadasi* fostered the growth of temple prostitution which had the effect of loosening moral codes to a great extent.

Rajputs—A Proud Aristocracy

The Rajputs regarded themselves as coming of the bluest blood in the country. They traced their pedigree to Indian gods are renowned heroes and quickly developed into a proud and haughty aristocracy with many prerogatives and privileges of which they were intensively jealous. Consistent with their pride of aristocracy they developed certain outstanding virtues.

Some Virtues of the Rajputs. They cultivated a spirit of chivalry and they were ever devoted to the championship of noble cause. They tried to live up to the epic ideal of heroism and traditions. Though a Rajput's ruling passion was war, yet he was generous and merciful to the fallen foe who asked for quarter. "A suppliant who had taken sanctuary for his hearth was sacred." Tod pays glowing tributes to the Rajputs when he states that, 'High courage, patriotism, loyalty, honour, hospitality and simplicity are qualities which must at once be conceded to them.'[2] They rejected the Machiavellian principles. A Rajput always had a high sense of honour and a great respect for truth. Even when a Rajput was victorious he seldom had recourse to those acts of barbarity which were the inevitable concomitants of muslim conquest. He never employed deceit or treachery in war and scrupulously abstained from causing misery

1 *A Survey of Indian History* by K. M. Panikkar, p. 131.
2 Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (edited by Crooke), II, p. 744.

to the poor and innocent people.'[1] The Rajputs took pride in honouring their women. They frequently staked their lives to protect them and their chastity and honour. A Rajput tried to marry his daughter in a noble family. They offered the most stubborn resistance to the foreign invaders, but once they yielded to the superior force and gave their oath of fidelity to the Liege-lord, they kept their loyalty to him even against wild provocations until the lord himself broke his word or his agreement. The Rajput women, like men, were inspired to lofty ideals of womanhood—deep devotion to and intense affection for husband and relations, high sense of honour, chastity, truthfulness and patriotism. They showed wonderful courage, conspicuous resourcefulness and unflinching determination in times of difficulty. There are several glowing instances of their smilingly entering the fire for saving their chastity and honour (*Jauhar*) or accompanying the dead husband on the funeral pyre (*Sati*). Some of the Rajput women followed their husbands to the battle-field. Inspite of the above-stated patent virtues the Rajputs had certain obvious vices such as inconsistency of temper, liability to emotion or passion, joint eagerness for feeds, excessive use of opium and wine, gambling incapacity to offer a united front to the enemy, etc.

Clanish Patriotism of the Rajputs.[2] The Rajput was extremely loyal to his clan and the clanish chief. To die in the battle-field for clan's honour or to protect his chief from death or wound in battle was esteemed as a personal triumph. A Rajput was proud and touchy, quick to take offence and to retaliate recklessly. The Rajput history abounds with the events of bloody dynastic feuds, sometimes even for the flimsiest cause. A Rajput's exclusive clanish loyalty which was confined to the person and territory of his chief made him entirely blind or indifferent to the wider nationalism or large patriotism of the whole of India. Consequently when foreign armies attacked India, they were more often than not met singly, each individual clan in its turn, with disastrous results for the country. 'On

[1] *Medieval India* by Dr. Iswariprasad, p. 37.
[2] *Early History of India* by N. N. Ghosh, p. 353.

the few occasions when they combined together the unity was not so much because they were inspired by a vision of India's political integrity as a whole, but by a chivalrous response to call to succour a brother prince in danger.' Had they shaken off their mutual rancour and jealousy and organised themselves coherently into some sort of enduring confederacy against the common foe, the history of India would have been undoubtedly written otherwise.

Rajput Government. The Government of the Rajputs was of a feudal character. The Rajput kingdom was divided into various estates or fiefs held by Jagirdars, who were often of the same family as the chief or prince. The strength and security of the state largely depended upon them. The land of the state was directly under the ruler and was administered by him. The chief source of state income was the revenue from the lands which was further supplimented by taxes on commerce and trade. The vessels or fief-holders of the king had to render military service when they were called upon to do so. They were bound to him by ties of personal devotion and were ever anxious to prove their fidelity in times of difficulty or danger. They had also to make certain payments to their king. Dr. Iswariprasad remarks that such government was bound to be inefficient. It fostered individualism and hindered the coalition of political forces in the state for common purpose. The king was the apex of the system, and so long he was strong and powerful, affairs were properly managed, but a weak man was soon reduced to the position of a political nullity. Consequently in absence of external danger feuds among different feudal vassals broke out.

In the works of Kshemendra, in *Rajatarangini* and the *Vishnu Dharma Sastra* we find references to regular bureaucracy, a hierarchy of officials. The generic term used for officials was Kayastha. K.M. Panikkar mentions that in numerous inscriptions dating from the middle of the eighth century there are references to Kayasthas as officials. The official classes were mainly recruited from among the Brahmans and certain castes included among the Sudras who had a tradition of education.

Though the Rajput kingdoms could not evolve a sound

organisation which could secure general peace and order, yet far away from the seats of government, local administration in the villages went on quietly. The rise and fall of dynasties could not affect the local tenor of life in the villages. The village council of elders continued to exercise its customary functions. Revenue was collected through these elders of the council and civil and criminal justice was administered through the agency of the Panchayats. The Patwari and the Headman of the village continued to collect the usual land produce for remittance to the treasury of the king.

Social Life in the Rajput Period.[1] The caste-system continued to be the back-bone of the Hindu society. Out of the four original castes—the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, the Vaisyas and the Sudras—many new sub-castes sprang up. Among these Brahmans took precedence and they commanded the greatest respect in society. They claimed the monopoly of all kinds of knowledge—spiritual and secular. They acted as counsellors and ministers to kings, but generally they confined themselves to study, teaching, performing sacrifices, religious rites and other charitable functions. They were renowned as priests and philosophers and consequently they enjoyed some privileges and facilities denied to other castes; for example capital punishment was not awarded to them. The Kshatriyas provided the rulers and soldiers. The Vaisyas now had given up agriculture and took up business and money-lending. The Sudras, apart from following the profession of agriculture and artisans, continued to render services to the higher castes. There were untouchables who lived outside the village or town. Though the rigidity of the caste-system was increasing in the later Rajput period, inter-caste marriages took place in the early Rajput period. The well-known Sanskrit author Bana refers to Parshava as the son of a Brahman born of a Sudra woman. We are informed in the Pratihar inscription dated 861 that Harishchandra a Brahman by caste married Bhadra, a Kshatriya girl. The caste of the children of inter-caste marriages was determined according to that of the father. But in the later part of the

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1 For details refer to *Indian Culture and Social life at the time of the Turkish Invasion* by M. Habib; Sachau's *Al Biruni's India.*

Rajput period such customs had disappeared and the rigidity of the caste-system was strictly enforced. The old social order began to disintegrate. In their struggle with Buddhism and specially against its principles of social equality and universal brotherhood, the Brahmans tightened their bonds of caste and defended themselves by the increased rigidity of caste associations. Consequently, as noted above, in place of the four original castes into which Hindu society was divided, a large number of new castes or sub-castes sprang up. These sub-castes came to be associated with birth, occupation, place of residence, customs, religious practices, differences about food and other similar factors. Probably the process of disintegration began with the Brahman caste. Besides the Rigvedi and the Yajurvedi Brahmans of old, their sub-castes multiplied and they came to be known by their territorial limits as Kanauji, Gaur, Malvi, Telugu, Konkan Brahmans and so on. Similarly sub-divisions among the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas soon followed. In due course several occupational castes such as the carders, weavers, smiths, fishermen, brewers, cowherds, carpenters, oilmen etc., which originally commenced only as craft-guilds, came to be regarded as distinct sub-castes. A new caste called the Kayasthas began to prosper. Its main function was clerical work. Probably it was a mixture of several castes. All this had evil repercussions on social and political life of the country, as the social and political vision of each sub-caste was circumscribed by its own interest. All this engendered narrow outlook, prevented the growth of feelings of fellowship, proved greatest stumbling block in the growth of healthy nationalism and hindered all kinds of progress in society. The old assimilative power of the Hindu society had disappeared. Foreign tribes and clans could not be absorbed now as it was done in the past. The rigidity of the caste and sub-caste had so much narrowed the social vision that the entry of new elements was completely prohibited. Women enjoyed a position of honour and nothing like the *pardah* system or the rigid seclusion of later times can be traced from the contemporary literature. They seem to have received proper education, cultivated the fine arts and sciences and entered into discussions with

scholars. The great Shankaracharya is said to have been defeated, on one occasion, by a Brahman lady, the wife of *Mandan Mishra*. Awanti Sundari, the wife of the famous Sanskrit poet Raja Shekhar, was renowned for her scholarship. Indulekha, Marula, Morika, Vijjika, Shila, Subhadra, Padmashri, Madalsa, Laxmi etc. were the well-known poetesses of Sanskrit literature of the period under review. Some of the women had acquired proficiency in the art of administration and warfare. Akkadevi, the sister of the Solanki King Vikramaditya of the South India, was not only a warrior woman but well-versed in administration. She was the governor of four provinces and led an expedition against a fort in the Belgaon District Bombay State and besieged it. Music and dancing, in addition to painting, were popular recreations among ladies of the higher ranks of society and daughters of kings and warriors even took lessons in horsemanship. The age of marriage was, however, growing earlier. Re-marriage was forbidden and many unfortunate women suffered life-long misery of Indian widowhood. Polygamy was well practised. The custom of *sati* was becoming more and more usual. The birth of a daughter was disfavoured and many girls were killed soon after their birth.

The Rajputs loved and honoured their womenfolk. A Rajput woman enjoyed great freedom and ancient Kshatriya right of maiden's choice (the *Swayamvara*—form of marriage). She was inspired by lofty ideals of womanhood, was chaste in conduct and patriotic in spirit and performed *Jauhar* to escape defilement at the hands of the foreign victor. But the condition of average woman was deteriorating. Her dependancy on her husband or male relatives was increasing.

Well-to-do upper class lived in palatial buildings and enjoyed all kinds of luxuries. Sometimes they maintained slaves. Hospitality was enjoined upon the people. There were several festivities and fairs all the year round. Music, dancing, drama, chess, dice, boating and hunting were the favourite pastimes. Both men and women used ornaments. They were fond of various kinds of dresses. While preparing clothes the variety, design and beauty of the cloth was carefully considered.

In the matter of diet purity was maintained about food.

However, the Buddhist doctrine of Ahimsa had still a hold on the minds of the people and consequently they refrained from the use of meat as an article of diet. But the upper classes freely and fully indulged in intoxicating drinks. The use of opium and wine among the Rajputs was very common. Smoking does not appear to have come into vogue though the use of betel leaves was common among the people.

To sum up, the Hindu society had lost its assimilative power. The old vitality of the society had completely disappeared. "The people were kept in ignorance, fed with unwholesome superstition and beguilded with gorgeous and never ending festivals." The growing number of sub-castes, and the rigidity of the caste-system and the dominance of the Brahmans who claimed to be the custodian of all spiritual and secular knowledge, narrowed considerably the social and political vision of the people.

Economic Conditions. Agriculture continued to be the main profession of the people. Irrigation projects were encouraged, and reservoirs, tanks, wells and canals were maintained by the State. In times of famine, scarcity or drought the State offered valuable aid to the farmers. The land tax was one-sixth of the produce. Trade and commerce flourished well. There were large populous cities linked together with long roads. India specialised in metallurgy, cotton and textile, steel and iron industries. On the whole India was a wealthy and prosperous country. It was famous for its fabulous wealth. All this 'invited the cupidity of' the inconoclast like Mahmud of Gazani and western peoples.

Literature. The Rajput kings were great liberal patrons of letters. Some of the Rajput kings were themselves authors of repute. Raja Munja of Dhar in Madhya Bharat was gifted with poetic talents of high order. His successor, Raja Bhoja, was a reputed author of many books on different subjects such as medicine, astronomy, grammar, religion, architecture, lexicography, arts, etc. His court was adorned by such eminent literary men as Padmagupta, Dhanika Halayudha, Dhananjaya and Amitagati. Scholars and writers under royal patronage continued useful work and some well-known books on poetry,

drama, romance, law, politics, history, science and medicine were written during this period. Bhatti, the author of *Ravan-vadha* ; Magha the author of *Sisupalvadha* ; Sri Harsha, the author of *Naisadhacharita* ; Padmagupta, the author of *Navasha-sankacharita* ; Damodar Gupta, the author of *Kultanimata*, and Jaideva, the author of *Gita Govind* deserve special mention as leading poets of the age. Jaideva is the most remarkable lyrical poet of the age. Among the prose-writers of the period Dandin, the author of *Daskumaracharita*, Dhanpal, the writer of *Tilakamanjari* and *Yasastilaka*, and Subandhu, the author of *Vasawadatta* and Bana ; the author of *Harshacharita* and *Kadam-bari* are most famous. Among the writers of drama, the most remarkable was Bhavabhuti, the author of *Maltimadhava*, *Maha-vircharita* and *Uttara Ram Charita*. He ranks next only to Kalidas and even excels him sometimes in the force and passion of style and superb mastery of diction. Other play-writers were Anandavardhan, the writer of the drama *Prabodhachandra*, Raja Shekhara who wrote *Karpur Manjari*, one of the best comedies in Indian literature, Bhatta Narayana, the author of *Venisanhara*, and Murari, the writer of *Anargh Raghav*. Among the historians Kalhana who wrote *Rajatarangini*, Bilhana who wrote *Vikramanka Charita*, Sandhya Karandit, who composed *Ramcharit* which is the history of the Pala dynasty and *Nava-shasankacharita's* author Padamgupta Parimal are worthy of mention. *Rajatarangini* is the history of Kashmir upto 1140 A. D. and *Vikramanka Charita* is the biography of Chalukya King Vikramaditya VI. Besides these, two more biographical sketches were written—*Prithviraj Vijay* by Jayanak and *Kumarpal Charit* by Hemchandra. Narrative literature was also enriched by such works as *Brihata Kathamanjari* by Kshemendra, *Katha-sarit sagar* by Soma Deva, *Suka-Saptati*, *Betal Panchvinsat* and *Simghasan dvantrisika*. The *Katha-sarit sagar* is an encyclopaedia of social life in the eleventh century. In the field of grammar Jayaditya wrote *Kasikvriti* and Bhartri-hari wrote a commentary on the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali. Sarvavarman's grammar *Kantra* was also a popular book. Dictionaries or *Koshas* were also written by Hemchandra, Yadava Bhatt, Purshottam Deva, Bhatta Kshirswami and

others. Commentaries were written on the *Kamsutras* of Vatsyayan, but a new original book *Kokashashtra* was written by Kaka Pandit. In the realm of music *Sangit Ratnakar* was written by Sharangadeva. Several works were also written on philosophy; for example *Praman Mimamsa* on Jainism by Hemchandra, *Nyayabindu* on Buddhism by Dharmakirti, commentaries on *Nyaya* by Uddotkar, Udaiyanacharya and others, Shridhar and Vachsapati Misra wrote works on Vaisheshik and Sankhya philosophy respectively. But the most famous and original works were those of Shankaracharya on the Vedant philosophy. Among the writers on law, medicine and astronomy mention may be made of Vijnaneshvara, the author of *Mitakshara*, the famous commentary on Hindu Law, the renowned physician Vagabhatta and the astronomer Bhaskaracharya. Vagabhatta wrote his famous book *Ashtang Sangraha* on medicine (Ayurveda) and Bhaskaracharya *Siddhanta Shiromany* on astronomy. Another famous book on medicine was *Madhavnidan* by Madhavkar. Aryabhatta's book on Mathematics. *Lilavati Bijganit*, had been very famous.

This period witnessed a new tendency in literature—the rise of the vernaculars. The Rajput bards sang the heroic deeds of their patrons and their ancestors in the stirring language of the people. The most famous of these bards was Chand Bardai, the author of *Prithviraj Raso*, an epic poem, which enumerates the exploits of his patron king Prithviraj Chauhan of Delhi. Thus, the period under review witnessed not only a great progress in the Sanskrit literature, but the foundation of the modern vernacular languages of India. Hindi, Gujrati, Marathi and Bengali have their beginning in the Rajput period. Poetry was first developed in the vernacular literatures of this period. The great Jain saint and writer Hemchandra Suri had done memorable work in the realm of vernacular literature.

Education. In the Rajput period education continued on the ancient model. Students received education in the homes or *ashramas* of teachers. But the Buddhist monasteries still continued to impart education freely to masses. Bengal and Bihar were studded with such monasteries or *vihars*. Among these the Vihar of Nalanda acquired international fame. Besides

this, Vikramsila in eastern Bihar, Vikrampur in eastern Bengal, Jagdhal in northern Bengal and Odantpuri in Patna district were the centres of education, both secular and religious.

Art

The Rajput period witnessed the perfection of temple architecture. Sculpture and architecture attained a very high level of excellence in the period under review. The art critics have divided this period into two parts in view of evolution of the temple architecture, the first part is called the early Rajput period (600 to 900 A. D.) and the second part the later Rajput period (900 to 1200 A. D.). The first part witnessed the regular progress in the evolution of architecture, the second one is marked with the abundance of ornamentation in the temple architecture. Besides this, the originality of the ancient times had disappeared and the artisans, though followed the old traditions, relied on volume to give an expression of grandious and lost elegance in the exuberance of ornaments. Their tastes had degenerated and moral perversities were represented on stone in the form of obscene figures. This was due to the influence of Tantrism on Hinduism. Hence it has been said that the architectural monuments of the age lacked the beauty of original art.

However, the early Rajput period has to its credit such architectural monuments as *rathas* of Mamallapuram, Kailash temple and some masterpieces of sculpture at Ellora and Eliphanta. The later Rajput period had six regional developments in architecture—Orissa, Khujaraho, Rajasthan and Madhya Bharat, Gujrat and Kathiawar, Chola and Hoysala kingdoms of the Deccan and Brindaban near Mathura. Although each regional manifestation has its own particular qualities, there is throughout the entire range of this type of architecture, a certain under-current of thought resulting in a standardization of forms, procedures and principles which indicate that fundamentally all these examples and phases of architecture belong to the same movement—Evolution of the Northern or Indo-Aryan style of Architecture.

Difference between the Northern or Indo-Aryan and Dravidian temple architecture. The temples of Northern or Indo-Aryan type are quite distinct from their Southern or Dravidian counter-

parts. Both differ in their nomenclature and designs. A temple of the Northern style has the following principal parts—

1. The sanctuary called *viman*. It has a dark chamber or cella called *Garbha-griha* for the idol or divine symbol.

2. The upper part of the *Viman*, above the cella, is called *Sikhara* or tower. It is lofty ribbed curvilinear or bulging spire. It is surmounted by a large cushion-shaped block of stone (*amalaka*) and above this stands the golden *Kalasa* or vase-shaped pinnacle. Just behind the Kalasa the temple banner flaps high.

3. In front of the *Garbha-griha* there is a pavilion called *Sabha-mandap* where the devotees assemble. It has a round dome above it.

4. Adjoining to this Mandap sometimes there are subsidiary structures. Temples of Khujaraho and Bhuvaneshwar are the examples of the Indo-Aryan style.

To compare with, (*a*) the Sikhar of the Indo-Aryan style is monolithic tapering and curvilinear spire ; the Dravidian sikhar is pyramidical with a series of small towers and storeys ; (*b*) The Dravidian style temples have extensive enclosures and *Gopurams*. Sometimes they have more than one *Gopurams* or gateways. By their dominant place, towering height and lavish decoration they reduce the central shrine to comparative insignificance. Within the Temple enclosures there are many subsidiary buildings both religious and secular. Within the temple walls there is a tank in the centre which is used for religious abulations. There are long corridors, extensive courtyards, pillared halls or *Mandaps* profusely ornamented with the figures of gods, animals and inanimate objects. All these features are absent in temples of the Northern style. The *rathas* of Mamallapuram, the Pallava temples of Kanchi, the Chola temples of Tanjore, shrines of Vatapi and the famous caves cut out of solid rocks on the banks of the Krishna are some of the best examples of Dravidian style.

Then there is the Chalukyan style of temple architecture. Here a temple is not square but star-shaped or polygonal. It has richly carved high bases or plinths which follow all the windings of the temple. On the length of vacant space thus

provided on the plinths figures of gods, goddesses and animals are carved out elaborately. Though it has pyramidial sikhar it is lower compared to that of the Northern style. The finest specimens of the Chalukyan style of architecture are represented by the famous Helebid temple and another temple at Belur.

The Rajputs were great builders. They spent money lavishly on building activities. Their irrigation works, dams and canals, artificial lakes, reservoirs, bathing places, *toranas* or arched gateways, *Kirtistambhas* or monumental towers, public wells (*Bavdis*), city-gates, and fortresses with their bastions, battlements and corner towers testify to their skill of architecture and engineering. The majestic, extensive and strong fortresses of Chittorgarh, Ranthambhor and Kumbhalgarh in Rajasthan, Mandu, Gwalior and Chanderi and Assergarh in Madhya Pradesh are conspicuous examples of their architectural skill. The finest examples of their domestic architecture are the palaces of Mansingh at Gwalior, the buildings at Amber (Jaipur) and lake palaces at Udaipur. Many of the Rajput cities and palaces either stand among hills in forts or by the site of beautiful artificial lakes, but the stately castle of Jodhpur in Rajasthan is perched upon a lofty, strong and inaccessible rock overlooking the town with its frowning bastions and battlements.

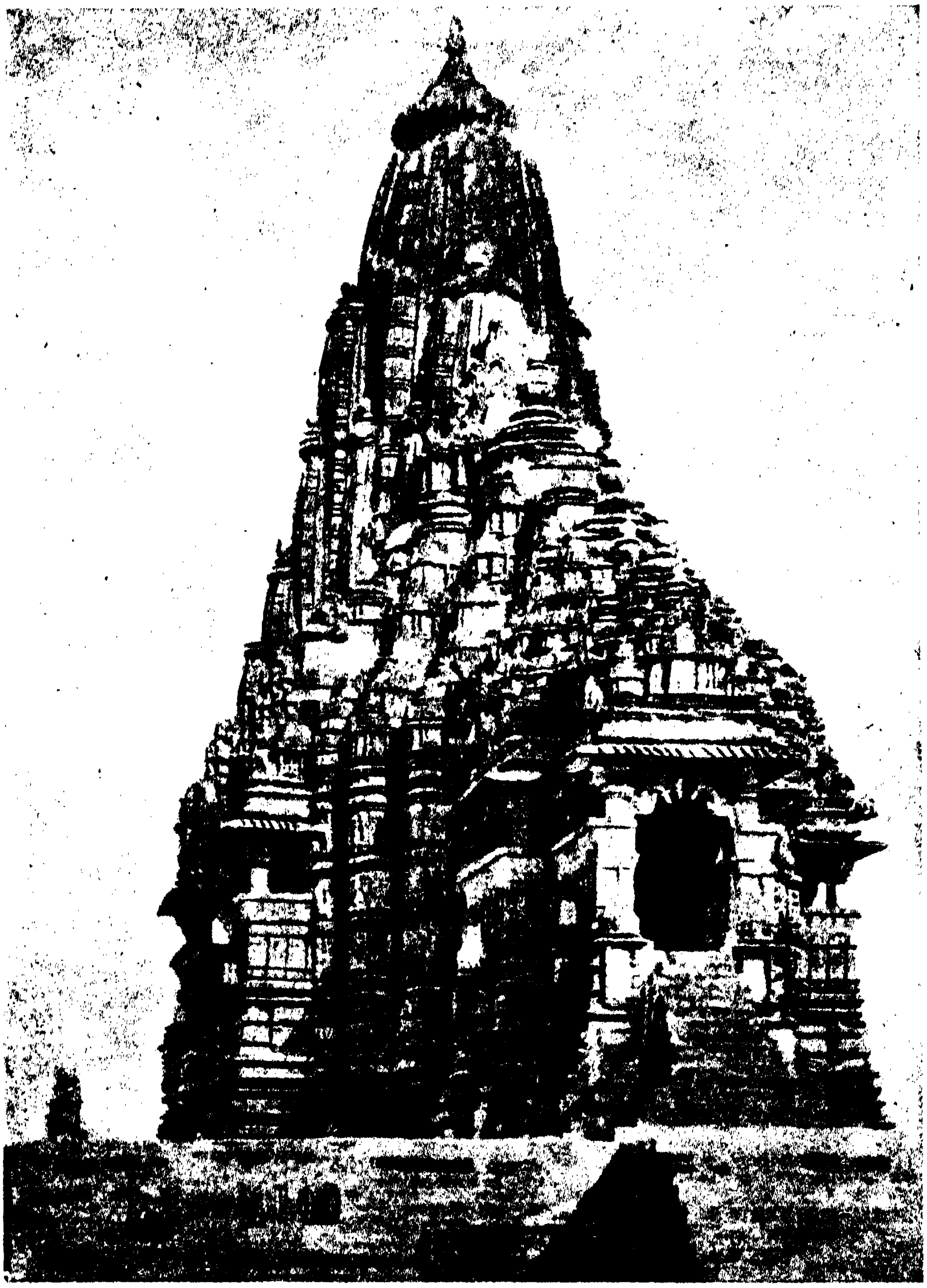
But the architectural activity of the period expressed itself most magnificently in the building of temples, and the Rajput rulers and nobles freely and liberally donated for it. Though architecture degenerated in the period, yet the spiritual content, the very basic principle of Indian architecture, finds its free play in the building activity of the age. Religious motive was predominant there. The Bhakti movement provided stimulus to the temple architecture which received its most splendid and profound perfection in the later Rajput period, the palmy days of the Bhakti cult. The artistic achievements of this period have won the admiration of the foreigners. Though most of the monuments and temples were destroyed during the Muslim invasions, yet a few which escaped the Muslim hand of destruction are enough to give us an idea of the artistic achievements of this age. The following description of the temples bears testimony to the statement.

Temples.[1] The most famous temples of the period in Northern India are those of Somnath in Saurashtra, Bhuvanesvara, Puri and Konark in Orissa, Khujaraho in Bundelkhand, Vindhya Pradesh region of Madhya Pradesh and Abu in Rajasthan. The temples in Orissa have evolved their own type—the Orissa style. The Orissan temples as a whole are of the astylar order, pillars being notable by their absence. But the most remarkable characteristic o f the Orissa-temples 'is the plain and featureless treatment of the interior contrasted with the profusely ornamented walls of the exterior, the surfaces of which are charged with superfluity of plastic patterns and forms.'[2] Temples at Bhuvanesvara in Orissa were constructed within a period of five hundred years extending from 750 to 1150 A. D. The Jagannath Temple at Puri was constructed about 1100 while the Sun Temple at Konark approximately 1250. The Lingraj Temple of Bhuvanesvara is not only the finest example of the Orissan style but it ranks as one of the foremost architectural production of India. It stands in the quadrangular enclosure 520 feet by 465 feet, and has all the four structures of fully developed Orissan temple type namely *Shri Mandir* or *Viman*, *Jagamohan* or pillared hall, *Nat Mandir* or Dancing Hall and *Bhog Mandir* or the Hall of Offerings. Many shrines and buildings surround the temple. But the most impressive feature of the temple is its great tower 180 feet high rising imposingly above the surrounding buildings. The Jagannath Temple at Puri is larger than the Lingraj. It has also all the four structures of the Orissan style, 310 feet in length and 80 feet in width, while its *sikhar* is about 200 feet in height. It stands within a walled rectangular enclosure 440 feet by 350 feet. But from architectural point of view it is merely an arid replica of its predecessors at Bhuvanesvara. But as Percy Brown points out the grandest achievement of this Eastern School of Architecture is the Sun

For more details and critical appreciation of the temple architecture refer to *Indian Architecture* (*Buddhist and Hindu*) by Percy Brown, Chapters XXI to XXVI, pp. 122-158.
Indian Architecture by Percy Brown, p. 123. For the characteristics of the Orissan style refer to *Canons of Orissan Architecture* by N. K. Bose.

Temple at Konark about twenty miles from Puri. It was constructed in the reign of king Narasingh Deva (1238-64). This temple illustrates in every aspect the fulfilment and finality of the Orissan style. There is a reasoned and systematic coordination of its part into architectural unity. The temple is dedicated to Surya or Sun-God. The Hindu religion visualises this 'deity standing in time's winged chariot urging on his team of seven horses with which he blazes his way through the heavens' till he unyokes at sunset. This conception is translated into temple form and therefore the whole structure is fashioned like a *ratha* or wheeled car being whirled along by the seven horses of the sun. First the platform for the temple is constructed. It is an immense terrace with twelve big wheels each about ten feet high fixed on either side to stimulate the *ratha* of the sun-god. Its sides are supported by seven richly caparisoned steeds rearing and straining in their harness as they strive to drag along the great vehicle. It is on this high platform that the main temple was erected consisting of *Jagmohan* or large hall 100 feet wide and 100 feet in height and a giant tower about 225 feet high from the ground. At the base of the tower three shrines are attached with spacious recesses each of which contains a life-sized minutely carved statue of sun-god. To add to the richness of the temple its immense surfaces are filled with sculptured forms and intricate designs of outstanding beauty. Few structures can boast of such abundance of plastic decoration as this temple. But today this stupendous temple work of superb craftsmanship of the artisans is a colossal ruin except the assemby hall.

Next is the Khujaraho group of temples in Vindhya Pradesh, region of Madhya Pradesh. It has one of the most refined and finished manifestations of Indian architecture in the Indo-Aryan style. The Khujaraho group has thirty temples. They have a definite individual architectural character. Each temple stands on a high and solid masonry terrace. None of them is imposing edifice as the largest is only slightly over hundred feet in length. But they are famous for elegant proportions, graceful contours and rich surface treatment. The touch-stone of the Indo-Aryan type of temple is the design of the temple's sikhars



TEMPLE AT KHAJURAHO.

and the Khujaraho temples illustrate this dominating feature splendidly. Their sikharas are most refined and elegent. Besides this, the exterior and interior parts including the ceiling, porches and outlying chambers all are enriched elaborately with the finest sculpture. The Khujaraho temples are dedicated to Jain Tirathankaras and Brahmanical deities like Shiva, Vishnu, etc.

Then comes the Rajasthan and Madhya Bharat group of temples.[1] There are sixteen Brahmanical and Jain temples at Osia, thirty-two miles from Jodhpur, the majority in a neglected condition. Mention may be made of *Kalika Mata* temple at Chittorgadh and Ekling temple few miles away from Udaipur. But the most exquisite examples of Northern Architecture in Rajasthan are the Jain-temples at Mount Abu. There the white marble hall and the central dome of eleven concentric rings and richly carved vaulted ceiling and pillars show excellent and delicate workmanship. Practically every inch of the surface is elaborated with beautiful sculptured forms. The Shiva temples at Nemavar, Udaypur and the ruins of other temples at Pathari and Gyaraspur and the Sas-Bahu temple of Gwalior in Madhya Bharat reveal to us that the traditions of the Indo-Aryan style were continued in this region successfully. Apart from this, a particular ornate and florid style of the Northern Temple architecture sprang up in Gujrat and the western region of India under the patronage of the Solanki rulers of Anhilavad and their ministers and governors. The Nilkantha temple at Sunak and the sun-temple at Modhera a few miles away from Patan, the old Solanki capital in Gujrat, are worthy of mention. The Modhera temple is noted for its pillared entrances with cusped archways, the elegance of its proportions and the atmosphere of spiritual grace. The entire composition of the temple is lit with the living flame of inspiration. The temples of Rudra Mala at Siddhapur and Somnath were restored and repaired in the twelfth century. The Rudra Mala temple is one of the largest and most sumptuously decorated religious monuments in India. Besides these,

1 Sir Lepel Griffin : *Famous Monuments of Central India.*

there are other well-known temples ; for example the Gondeswara temple at Sirnar in Nasik, the temples at Balsane in Khandesh and the Jain temples on the Shatrunjaya and Girnar hills in Kathiawar. The temples at Brindaban constructed in the sixteenth century betray changes in the temple architecture owing to the Islamic domination.

Lastly, Kashmir had developed its own temple architecture which rose to its greatest heights under Lalitaditya and Avantivarman in the eighth and the ninth centuries. The great Temple of the Sun at Martand and the Shiva and Vishnu temples of Avantipur in Kashmir illustrate best the Kashmir temple architecture.

Religion. As in the domain of political and social life of the country so also in the sphere of the religious life, the predominant tendency of the age was segregation, disruption and disintegration. Buddhism was decaying, its place was being taken by Hinduism which was divided into innumerable sects.

Buddhism. In the field of religion the most striking feature of this period was the disintegration of the Buddhist fold and decline of Buddhism. By the end of this age the Mahayan sect had completely eclipsed the Hinyan sect and in the eastern India the Mahayan sect resembled Tantrism to a great extent. Buddhism now centred in the Buddhist Vihars. The superstition, corruption and dissensions that had insidiously crept into the Buddhist church, the luxurious and comfortable lives of the monks, the insidious distinction between the lay followers and the regular clergy, Brahmanical revival and crusading zeal of Kumaril and Shankara, growing indifference of the upper classes towards Buddhists, indifference of the people towards Buddhism, disfavour to the Buddhist doctrines of Ahimsa by the ruling race of the Rajputs and foreign invasions brought about the complete decay of Buddhism. But its shadow lingered on for some period in Bengal.

Jainism. Jainism was, however, patronised by the Chalukyas and the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan. There, too, Brahmanism supplanted it later on. In the far south some of the Gang and Kadamba rulers patronised it liberally. Now it is confined to Rajasthan, Gujrat and some parts in northern India.

Hinduism.[1] The Hinduism of the Rajput period is essentially different from the Brahmanical religion of the Vedic and the Pre-Buddhist period. Though the new Hinduism was theoretically based on the old Vedic beliefs and practices, yet it had evolved its own characteristic features such as the doctrine of *avatars*, predominance of the theistic sects the Vaishnavism and Saivism, the Bhakti cult, Tantrism and the construction of magnificent temples. The new religion with all its different rituals looked for inspiration to a new class of literature, the Epics and the Puranas.

1. *The Doctrine of Reincarnation and the Bhakti cult.* We have observed in the earlier chapter that Hinduism was organised on a popular basis during the Gupta Age. The Puranas and the Mahabharat were rewritten. It 'provided the people with a mythology, a corpus of unparallel heroic history, a rich system of popular ethics and a religious literature for the masses, catholic enough to include the worship of all creeds inside Hinduism.' The neo-Brahmanism had evolved certain new doctrines the most important among which is the *avatar* or incarnation doctrine. According to this doctrine the Godhead himself does not come down in the world in human form, but only men with such part of divine powers as is required to uproot the evils of the age reincarnate. Vishnu as the protector of the world is the God of *avatars.* Incarnations of Krishna and Rama are identified with him. Those who had worked for the re-establishment of religion were elevated to the semi-divine dignity. Thus by the sixth century Buddha himself had been included among the *avatars* of Lord Vishnu and declared an orthodox god to be worshipped by Hindu masses. The Matsya Purana and the Bhagavat Purana both mention Buddha as an *avatar* of Vishnu. As a matter of fact one of the great contributions of the Gupta religious revival is the emphasis on the Hindu doctrine of *avatars.* The *avatar* or incarnation doctrine had 'the advantage of providing the worshipper with personal gods, without his having in any way to break with the general

[1] For details refer to *Vaishnavism, Saivism, and minor religious systems* by R. G. Bhandarkar ; *Materials for the Early History of the Vaishnava Sect* by H. C. Raychaudhri.

body of Hinduism which emphasised the impersonal aspect of Godhead and insisted on the doctrine of *Neti* (not like this). This unknowable *nirguna* God becomes knowable when he takes human shapes and the compromise between the rigidity of Hindu philosophical thought and popular demand for devotion to personal gods was easily affected by the doctrine of avatars (incarnations).'[1] This brought *Bhakti cult* into existence. *Bhakti* means intense love and devotion to personal God. It is unmotived devotion to God. There is no desire or ambition attached to the *Bhakti*. It aims at the salvation or the emancipation of soul from the worldly bondage. The devotion to god is expressed in words, deeds and thoughts. Bhakti emphasised rituals and external rites and observances. Its significance was that it united different sects of Hinduism. Thus God, soul, karma and reincarnation were the principal doctrines of Hinduism of the age.

2. *Vaishnavism.* The Bhakti cult gave rise to two different sects of Hinduism—Vaishnavism and Saivism in the period under review. Vishnu and Shiva both became popular gods. Both of them were worshipped with reverence and elaborate rituals. But more emphasis was laid on the external rites than on the inner sentiment or the endeavour for the union of soul with the *Brahma* or God. This conception was gaining ground that Vishnu frequently incarnates to maintain the right kind of Dharma and to protect the universe. The Mahabharat, the Gita and the Puranas give great details of Vishnu's avatars. In the Rajput period the philosophy and practices of Vaishnavism were developed elaborately giving rise to many sub-sects ; for example a Vaishnava saint Ramanuj set up *Shri* sect in the twelfth century and Madhvacharya *Sad Vaishnava* sect in the thirteenth century. In fact Ramanuj, Madhava, Nimbark and Vallabhacharya were great exponents of Vaishnavism. In the south Vaishnavism was developed by Alavar saints.

3. *Saivism.* Saivism is considered as the oldest religion in India.[2] Its roots lie deep in the religion of the Indus Valley people. By the sixth century A. D. it became an established

[1] *Survey of Indian History* by K. M. Panikkar, p. 122.
[2] *Religions of India*, Vol. I, by A. P. Karmarkar.

sect of Hinduism and god Shiva who was now considered not only as a destroyer but also creator and preserver was worshipped by the people. In the Rajput or early medieval period various sects of Saivism rose into prominence such as *Pasupat*, *Kapalika*, *Lingayat* or *Virsaiva*, *Kalmukha* etc. They differ in details. But Saivism, its philosophy and devotional worship all were well evolved in the Deccan by the four *acharyas* of Saivism and its sixty three wondering saints called Nayanmars. The Rashtrakutas and the Cholas patronised Saivism and made it very popular. *Lingayat* is the important Saiva sect of the south. It gave prominence to the Linga (Phallus) and the Nandin or Bull and emphasised Bhakti and such virtues as truth, morality, self-surrender, love, devotion, cleanliness etc. If followed anti-Brahmanical practices like the widow remarriage, Saivite formula for the Gayatri mantra, etc. The northern Saiva sects—the Pasupatas, the Kapalikas, the Kalamukhas, Kashmir Saivism, the Saivas, the Nathas and the Arhats, differed in their practices. The Pasupatas besmeared their body with ashes, laid down in ashes, made the sound ha ! ha ! walked as if disabled, and practised various austerities. The Kapalikas and Kalamukhas followed very unhealthy and revolting practices like eating food in a skull, keeping a pot of wine, and worshipping god Maheshwar as seated therein, holding a *Trisula* in hand, besmearing the body with the ashes of a dead body etc. They conceived their personal god Rudra or Shiva in a very horrible form. The Kashmir Saivism was more human and rational compared to other Saiva sects. Instead of following ghastly, wild and fantastic courses of discipline it practised such religious rituals as were healthy and conducive to the growth of spirituality. There was another Saiva sect called *Saivas*. It was moderate and rational.

4. *The Sakta cult*. The Rajput period witnessed the growth of the Saktism. Its followers worshipped power in the form of Mother called by various names—Adisakti, Maha Sakti, Durga, Kali, Jagadamba etc. This mother goddess was conceived as the consort of Shiva and creator of all power. They offered human and animal sacrifices to please her.

5. *The Tantrism*. The Tantrism was associated with the Sakta cult. If believed in certain dormant powers in human

body and attempted to revive them by *Mantras*, *Japa*, and other magic powers. Most obscene and immoral practices were also followed.

6. *Hindu Reformation Movement and Shankaracharya.* The Brahmanical mind, being ritualistic in regard to religion, elaborated in the early medieval period the great doctrines of Mimamsa. 'As a religion, Mimamsa is only concerned with rituals. The Mimamsak lives in a world of self-revealed Vedas and he is concerned only with the correct performance of the rites laid down.' Under Prabhakara and Kumaril the Mimamsa doctrine gained great ascendancy among the followers of Hinduism in the seventh and eighth centuries. In fact it was a protest against the Puranic religion of the people and was opposed to Buddhist and Upanishadic thought. It excluded not only a personal deity to be realised either through devotion (*Bhakti*) or through Yoga, but also clashed with the teaching of the Buddha. Gradually this barren ritualism was becoming a national religion. But Sankaracharya, the protagonist of *Advaita*, arrested its progress and provided Hinduism with a corpus of philosophic doctrines. He was opposed to the system of mechanical rituals which usurped the position of religion and he attacked the advocates of Mimamsa.

Sankaracharya was born probably in 788 A. D. at Kaladi village in Malabar, southern India. Being a son of a Brahman he studied all the Vedas and the Vedangas at an early age. Instead of leading the life of a *grihastha* or house-holder he became a *sanyasi* and travelled all over India. He soon rose to prominence and became the greatest philosopher of the medieval age. He propounded in various different places his doctrine of *Advaita* Vedant. He traced it to ancient Upanishadic teachings. He endeavoured to reconcile the contemporary Vedic faiths with his Vedantism. His philosophy is that nothing exists but the supreme spirit or Brahma and it is shrouded by *maya* or ignorance. One has to cast it off and realise one's identity with the supreme spirit. He advocated the *jnana marga* (true knowledge) and asceticism for the purpose. He did not emphasise Bhakti as a means of salvation. His teachings can be summarised in—*Brahman satyam, jagan mithya, jivo*

brahmaiva naparah ; it means that Brahman is real, the world is an illusion, the individual self is the same as the supreme self. His important works were his commentaries on the Gita, the ten principal *Upanisads* and the *Brahmasutras*. Some scholars hold the opinion that Shankaracharya destroyed Buddhism by his relentless and militant crusade against it throughout India and decisively defeated Buddhism on the philosophical plane. But N. N. Ghosh in his book "*Early History of India*", p. 64, argues systematically and discards this notion. According to Panikkar the significance of Shankaracharya lies in the fact that he was not merely a philosophical thinker reconciling bold and original system with the doctrines and traditions of the past, thereby providing Hinduism with a philosophical background, but also a practical reformer. He purged the worship of the Devi of objectionable features that had crept into it from the rituals, traditions and practices of the tantrics. However, the main organisational work which Shankaracharya undertook for Hinduism was the establishment of the four great *maths*, at Badrinarain in the north, at Puri in the east, at Dwarka on the west coast and at Sringeri in the south. The Sringeri math became his chief centre of learning. These pontifical seats were to be occupied by religious heads called Shankaracharyas. There they were to maintain the unpolluted teaching of Advaita and to maintain effectively ascendancy of Upanishadic thought. These great monasteries together with their subsidiary institutions have helped to maintain to a great extent not only the orthodoxy of Shankara's teachings but also the hold of Hinduism on the masses. Connected with the establishment of these *maths* is the re-organisation of the Hindu monastic orders by Shankaracharya. He organised Sanyasis into a regular order or body who spread his creed all over India.

Later on, the doctrines of Shankara were popularised by a very large number of temple colleges which came into existence. These colleges, giving free higher education on a large scale, were predominantly religious and excluded the study of the Buddhist philosophy. In the re-organisation of Hinduism these colleges played a great part. All this is interpreted by K. M. Panikkar as the Hindu Reformation.

Thus, before the advent of the Muslims Buddhism was fast

crumbling and Hinduism was asserting its universal supremacy in India. It re-organised its popular doctrines, supplied a higher philosophy that was generally accepted by the intellectual classes, provided new popular forms which satisfied the religious aspiration of the masses and absorbed into its fold the religion of Buddha. The popular elements, such as the doctrines of *Paramatma Jivatma*, *Maya*, the principle of *Ahimsa*, the doctrine of incarnation (*avatara*), the organisation of *Sadhus* or *Maths* and the worship of images, have been united into one faith. This was new Hinduism whose exponents were Kumaril Bhatta, Shankaracharya, Madhvacharya and Ramanuja. From Kashmir to the Cape Comorin, the worship of Shiva, Vishnu and Devi prevailed. The followers of Vishnu began to worship Ram and Krishna, the legends and tales about whose doings spread all over the country. The followers of Shiva were divided into many sects like *Pasupatis*, the *Kapalikas* and the *Lingayats*. Some of these sects of Saivism followed very revolting practices. The followers of various faiths—kings, queens and wealthy trading classes alike vied with each other in building temples to their favourite deities and the whole country was covered with such temples. Another important feature of Hinduism at this time was the practice of making pilgrimage to the holy places in the appropriate season.

In the social structure a distinct change had come about in the form of multiplicity of castes and more rigid observance of the caste rules. Small occupational groups came to take the place of the older and bigger caste groups. The political structure was weak. India lacked political unity and social solidarity. She was merely a geographical expression. Patriotism was wholly absent. The narrow outlook, engendered by the rigid caste system, the dominance of the priestly class, the growth of so many religious sects and the rise of so many petty feudal states were the greatest stumbling blocks in the growth of nationalism. The political structure of the states was based on proud aristocracy and corrupt bureaucracy, united only by a dynastic interest. The Indian political system, weak and decadent in itself, was unable to withstand the shocks of Muslim invasions. The ship was already wrecked before the storm of Mohammedan attacks could come.

Chapter 13

India and Islam

IN the preceding chapter it is explained how several different elements have hindered the smooth flow of the Indian cultural trends before the advent of Islam in India ; the predominant tendency of the age was segregation, disruption and disintegration. Consequently the cultural evolution of India was obstructed, the assimilative power of the Hindu Society had disappeared and the creative powers of the Indian culture had become dormant. In the medieval age the Hindu culture had to face the opposite trends of the foreign culture. The age witnessed the close contact of two different and distinct cultures—the Hindu and the Muslim or Islamic. Hence the Hindu and the Muslim cultural ingredients coalesced to form a new cultural life. Let us endeavour to understand it.

The new Islamic or Muslim culture was introduced in India by the Arabs.[1] The expansion and propagation of the Islamic culture was attempted by means of peace as well as force. The former was followed by the Arab traders and Muslim saints or *darvesh*. The later was adopted by the Arab, Turkish and Mughal invaders. It has been already explained in chapter IX that the Greeks, Romans and Persians participated in the external trade of India. Later on the Arabs took a very active part in India's commerce with East as well as West. The Arabs,

For details about the advent of the Arabs refer to *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* by Tarachand, Chapter II ; *The Advent of the Muslims in India*, pp. 29-48.

therefore, entered India as traders and sailors. Before the advent of Islam the Arab settlements had gradually grown up on the western coast of India. The rise of Islam in the beginning of the seventh century and the integration of the Arab tribes under a sovereign centralised state provided a tremendous impetus to the movements of expansion of Islam. Soon the Muslim armies began to hover on the frontiers of India and the Arab fleets began to scour the Indian seas. The first Muslim fleet appeared in Indian waters in 636 A.D. when an Arab army was sent across the ocean to Thana in the Bombay state. In the meanwhile commerce by sea continued and the Arabs made their settlements in some towns along the South Indian coast. Rowlandson and Francis Day both remark that the Muslim Arabs first settled on the Malabar coast about the end of the seventh century.[1] In the eighth century the Arab fleets attacked Broach and other harbours on the Kathiawad coast. Their trade began to flourish and settlements continued to multiply. Henceforth they were welcomed as traders and all facilities were provided to them to settle peacefully, acquire landed property and openly and freely follow their religion. Before the ninth century was far advanced they had spread over the whole of the western coast of India. In Gujrat the Arabs erected their mosques and received liberal protection from the Hindu kings of Gujrat. The Zamorin rulers of Calicut patronised the Arab merchants considerably. All along the Malabar coast there were the houses of the Muslim Arabs and they had their own *Qazis* and *Muftis* and mosques. Several sufis or Islamic saints visited India and delivered sermons, the earliest of them was Al-Hujwiri who expired in 1072 A.D. In the tenth century followers of Islam made their advent on the eastern coast of India. Within comparatively short time they acquired influence both in politics and society. 'On the one side their leaders became ministers, admirals, ambassadors and farmers of revenue and on the other they made many converts, propagated their religious ideas, established mosques and erected tombs which became centres of the

[1] Rowlandson : *Tuhfat-ul-Mujahidin*, Preface ; Francis Day : *The Land of the Perumals*, p. 365.

activities of their saints and missionaries.' All this could not but influence the cultural trends in the South India. But before we attempt to discuss the impact of Islam in the south let us survey the advent of the Muslims in northern India.

Muslim Invasions of India. Within a century after the death of Mohammad the prophet (570-632 A. D.) the Arabs conquered extensive territories and in 711 A. D. the empire of Islam extended from the frontiers of China to the shores of Atlantic. In the middle of the seventh century the Arabs made an attempt to enter India but failed miserably. However, it was in 711-713 A.D. that Sind and Multan were conquered for the Arabs by Muhammad-Bin-Kasim, nephew of Al-Hajaj, the Arab Governor of Basra. The Arabs had to fight contested battles with the forces of Sind's ruler Raja Dahir at Debal, Rawar and Brahmanabad. Though the Arab conquest was confined to Sind and Multan, they failed to retain their political power in that region for long. The Arabs being unskilled in the art of government left the administration of the conquered country in the hands of the natives. The death of their leader Mohammad-Bin-Kasim meant the end of the first Muslim occupation of Sind. Though the Arab conquest of Sind was politically insignificant, yet it had far reaching effect on muslim culture. It was India and not Europe that taught Islam in the impressionable years of its youth. The Arabs learnt from the Hindus, philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, medicine, chemistry and the art of administration and carried these to the West.

Next followed the Muslim conquest of the Punjab by the Turks of Ghazni—Subuktgin and his son and successor Mahmud (995-1030). The Punjab at this time was ruled by the Shahi dynasty of the Hindus whose sway extended as far as Kabul in the west. Subuktgin defeated and deprived Shahi ruler Jaipal of his trans-Indus territory and his son Mahmud gradually wrested the rest of the kingdom. Acquisition of the fabulous wealth of India and the propagation of Islam at the point of sword were the two motives that inspired him to invade India almost annually. He attacked the Northern India except Bengal and Bihar for seventeen times. Although the treasures which he had carried away were replenished and the temples

that he desecrated were rebuilt and repaired, his expeditions were altogether barren of permanent political results. However, he was a pioneer who, after exposing the political and military weakness of India to the Muslim world, opened the way for the conquest of the land of Infidels by later generations of his co-religionists.

Foundation of the Muslim Rule. Inspite of the previous repeated attacks of the Muslim powers, foundations of the Muslim Empire in India were laid by Shahab-ud-Din Ghori (1175-1206). The struggle between the rulers of Ghazni and their feudatories of Ghor that went on far about a quarter of a century enabled Shahab-ud-Din and his elder brother Ghiyas-ud-Din to seize the throne of Ghazni in 1173 and drive out Bahram Shah, the degenerate descendent of Mahmud of Ghazni. Shahab-ud-Din then turned his attention towards the fertile plains of India and in the following ten years he easily conquered and quickly annexed Multan, Uchh (Sind) and Lahore. The Ghori invader Shahab-ud-Din then confronted the Rajput rulers, but he defeated Prithviraj of Delhi, the Rajput leader, in the second battle of Tarain in 1192. This was followed by the conquest of Ajmer, Kanauj and Banaras. On his retirement from India, Shahab-ud-Din's lieutenant Kutub-ud-Din Aibak and Mohammad Bakhtiyar Khilji continued his work of conquest. They conquered Gwalior, Kalinjar, Gujrat, Bengal and Bihar. Within thirty years, the entire region between the Indus and the Brahmaputra permanently passed over to the hands of the Muslims. The foundation of the Muslim rule in India was now laid rather permanently.

Establisment of Delhi Kingdom

The Slave Dynasty (1206-1290). After the death of Shahab-ud-Din Ghori, his viceroy Kutub-ud-Din Aibak, who founded the Slave Dynasty, ruled India from 1206-1210. He greatly extended the conquests made by Ghori and with the assistance of Mohammad Bakhtiar Khilji he brought the whole of northern India under his sway. Other famous rulers of the dynasty were Iltutmish and Balban. The former saved the infant Muslim Empire from ruin and dismemberment by putting down the resistance offered to the authority of the Sultan of Delhi

by Kubacha, Yalduz and the Khilji governors of Bengal and Bihar. He extended the dominion by conquering Malwa and Sind. Later on Balban, as a minister, crushed the rebellious Hindu kings and the Muslim Governors and repelled the attacks of the Mongols. As a king, he reorganised the administration, strengthened the north-western frontiers of the empire and protected it from the raids of the Mongols, raised the royal dignity and struck deep the roots of the Muslim power into the fertile soil of India. The last ruler of the dynasty was murdered and Jalal-ud-Din Khilji became the Sultan of Delhi.

Expansion and Consolidation of Delhi Kingdom

The Khilji Dynasty (1290-1320). The Khiljis retained the throne of Delhi for nearly 28 years. The most important and successful ruler of this dynasty was Ala-ud-Din Khilji (1296-1316). He made the Muslim power more stable in India. By 1312 the kingdom of Delhi reached its zenith. Nearly the whole of India was under Ala-ud-Din. His empire extended from Lahore in the north to Dwarsamudra in the south and from Gujrat in the west to Lakhnauti in the east. It was the first Muslim Empire that covered the whole of India. But this Empire lacked the elements of permanence, as its very vastness was the cause of its decay and decline. On account of continuous wars he did not get any time to unite the different parts of his empire into one organic whole and consequently the last years of his empire witnessed unwieldy fabric crumbling. However, the reign of Ala-ud-Din Khilji is significant for the following reasons.

If he himself conquered and subjugated the Rajput kingdoms of Mewar, Ranthambhor, Gujrat etc., his commander Malik Kafur conquered and annexed the Deccan kingdoms of Devgiri, Warangal and Madura. This ushered in an era of aggressive imperialism in the history of the Sultanate. Secondly, his abolition of the feudal system of administration led to the centralisation of all kinds of authority in the hands of the Sultan of Delhi. Thirdly, his military government and reforms led to general prosperity and internal peace and security from external invasions. In view of his reforms, he may be said to deserve the title of a 'political economist.' Fourthly, he 'expounded the

theory that the king was responsible for the good government of the country and as such he should not be bound by the verdict of the Muslim Ulemas.' This is the commencement of the process of secularization of the State in India. The Khilji rule is, therefore, significant in the medieval history of India, both for the territorial expansion and for the beginning of a new noble ideology in the realm of administrative doctrines. The last ruler of the Khilji dynasty was assassinated and Ghazi Malik ascended the throne as Ghias-ud-Din Tughlak.

Tughlak Dynasty (1320-412 A.D.). Ghias-ud-Din Tughlak founded Tughlak Dynasty. The Tughlak Sultans rose into power as the great champions of the Muslim cause that was being seriously endangered at the time by the convert Hindus like Malik Kafur and Malik Khusrau. The imperial policy of the Tughlaks was different from that of the Khiljis. Ala-ud-Din was contented with the acknowledgment of his suzerainty by the Hindu monarchs of the South, whereas Ghias-ud-Din and Muhammad Tughlak both believed in the policy of conquest, subjugation and direct annexation. The Deccan kingdoms of Devgiri, Warangal and Dwarasamudra were all conquered and annexed. The empire of Delhi thus reached its widest territorial limits covering nearly the whole of India under the Tughlak Sultans. It was divided into 23 provinces and included the Punjab, U. P., Bihar, Bengal, Tirhut, Sind, Malwa, Gujrat and the Deccan. But its integrity and solidarity could not be maintained for long by the Tughlaks.

The period of Mohammad Tughlak's rule (1325-1351) is both interesting and instructive. The remarks that he was a "mixture of opposites" and a "compound of contradictions" do not appear to be true. He was a distinguished scholar and a man of ideas who introduced several schemes such as the transfer of capital, token currency and ambitious schemes of conquests. These schemes have been described as visionary and their failure is assigned to their impracticable character. This is far from truth. His schemes which had nothing wrong in them show that he was capable of ingenius schemes and possessed a marvellous breadth of visions. Dr. Ishwari Prasad rightly remarks that his mistake lay in their execution rather

than in their originality. However, the civil administration that he organised, bears the stamp of his individuality, spirit of toleration and justice. The closing years of his reign witnessed widespread discontent and rebellion, and the seeds of the disintegration of the Delhi Empire then were sown. Bengal and Gujrat had become independent and the Bahamani kingdom and Vijayanagar Empire were established in the Deccan.

Mohammad Tughlak was succeeded by his cousin Feroz Tughlak. During his rule (1351-1388) India enjoyed a remarkable spell of peace. He called a halt to the policy of territorial extension and annexation. He let slip the provinces of Bengal and Sind and made little effort to recover Deccan. Though he could not shake off his bigotry and treated the Hindus and the Shias unjustly and harshly, he deserves our admiration for his administration. 'He was the first Muslim king of India who had accepted the principle that the duties of a sovereign are not limited only to the protection of person and property of his subjects, but that the State must also adopt measures which contribute to their happiness and general welfare.' He revised the entire penal code of the age and abolished some of the very brutal and unhuman punishments of the period. He made extensive arrangements for irrigating agricultural lands, reduced the taxes on land, revised the revenue regulations and abolished many other vexatious duties on small trades and professions. Education was encouraged and several schools and colleges were maintained by the state. There free education was provided to the people. He was exceedingly fond of building new towns, palaces and mosques and planning gardens. He revived the Jagir and Slave-systems that proved rather detrimental to the State.

Unfortunately, all the beneficent activities of Firoz Tughlak could not stay the hand of disintegration and the Empire of the Tughlaks was quickly broken down to pieces after his death. To make the situation worse, there appeared two Sultans of Delhi, within a short distance, at one and the same time and the Imperial Crown was tossed to and fro like a shuttle-cock between the contending factions. It was at this time that Timur

invaded India and attacked Delhi and converted it into shambles. His invasion struck a fatal blow on the tottering Tughlak Empire.

Collapse of the Delhi Sultanate (1412-1526 A. D.)

The Sayyid Dynasty (1414-1431). After the Tughlaks Sayyid Khizra Khan ascended the throne of Delhi and founded the Sayyid Dynasty. There were four rulers of the dynasty. Mr. Smith considers that Sayyid rulers never assumed the royal style or struck coins in their own names and their rule was confined to the walls of Delhi. During their reign rebellions broke out frequently in the whole of the empire. 'The history of this dynasty is nothing but a record of marchings and counter-marchings to get the allegiance of rebellious nobles and to collect the revenues of the State.' The last ruler of this dynasty abdicated in 1451 in favour of Bahlol Lodhi, who was the Governor of the Punjab.

The Lodhi Dynasty (1451-1526). Bahlol Lodhi founded the Lodhi dynasty. When he became the Sultan he suppressed all the disorder and conquered Jaunpur which considerably strengthened his position. By his conquests of Kalpi, Dholpur, Bari and Alapur he partly recovered the former glory of Delhi Sultanate. He was succeeded by his son Nizam Khan who assumed the title of Sikandar Lodhi. He was the most notable sovereign among the Lodhis, but he was a staunch Muslim and persecuted the Hindus. However, he was a patron of learning. His death in 1517 was a signal for the disruption of the Delhi empire. His successor Ibrahim Lodhi was defeated by Babar on the historic plain of Panipat in 1526. It brought the Sultanate of Delhi to an end.

The forces of disintegration gained considerable speed during the successors of the Tughlaks. In course of time, the provincial governors established petty independent kingdoms on the ruins of the mighty Delhi Empire. The decline and disintegration of the Delhi Empire did not affect the political ascendancy of the Muslims ; on the other hand, the rise of the new Muslim kingdoms meant the further consolidation of the Muslim power.

During the early part of the sixteenth century before the

advent of Babar, the whole of India was divided into four zones of the independent kingdoms—the northern belt of Muslim kingdoms comprised Sind, Multan, Delhi, Jaunpur and Bengal; the middle belt consisted of Gujrat, Malwa, Khandesh and Bahmani kingdoms. Wedged in between these two groups of Mohammedan powers were Hindu Rajput States of Marwar, Mewar, Bundelkhand, Gondwana and Orissa. In the south of the Muslim kingdom of Bahmani was the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar. The Mughals later on conquered these petty kingdoms and annexed them one after the other.

Features of Muslim Rule in India. The Muslim conquest of India tells a different tale. The history of the Mohammedan rule in India is more a chronicle of kings, courts and conquests than of an organic or a national growth. It is the kings and their doings that fill page after page of Mohammedan history. The people and their culture do not very much matter and therefore are given a secondary place. Another characteristic of the Muslim rule in India is that the early dynasties were short-lived. Dynasty after dynasty tumbled down after ruling for a very short period. Their history is of unceasing round of valour, greatness, discord, degeneracy and decay. Thirdly, the Mohammedans were the first invaders of India who were not absorbed into the elastic and ever-expanding Hindu-fold. Many invaders before them—the Greeks, Scythians, Mongolians, Parthians, etc.—a few generations after their settlement in India had been completely Hinduized in name, speech, manners, religion, dress and ideas. In fact, they had lost themselves in the ocean of the Hindu community. But the Mohammedans ever remained a separate community in India. Their religion, Islam, being fiercely monotheistic religion, could not allow any compromise with polytheism or admit a plurality of deities. The fact is that the assimilative power of the Hindu religion, which observed the ingredients of different and distinct sects making them its own parts, had disappeared by the time the Muslims entered India. Those very Hindus whose ancestors embraced foreigners, and offered them an honourable status in their society, now considered mere touch of a foreigner a grave sin. Therefore there is no wonder if the Hindus and

Muslims had to live in the same land without being able to mix together freely. Nothing has enabled them to bridge the gulf between them. Though Pandit Nehru in his book '*Discovery of India*' has stated that the Muslim invaders were absorbed in India, their royal dynasties were completely Indianised and they considered India as their motherland, yet Sir Jadunath Sarkar's view about the Muslims in India deserves mention. He remarks that the Indian Muslims, throughout the succeeding centuries, turned towards a spot in Mecca, had their own law-code, their own administrative system, their own language, literature, shrines and saints.[1] They never restricted to India as is the case with the Hindus. They always looked to the countries outside India and sought models from Arabia, Syria, Iran and Egypt. Moreover, they were frequently engaged 'in oppressing and persecuting the majority of the country with which they had cast their lot.' The Hindus, on the contrary, in their zeal to absorb the Muslims went so far as to make an *avatar* of the Emperor Akbar in the Allopanished. But the Muslims neither yielded on the cardinal points of their faith nor accepted the few conventions needed to enter Hindu society. Moreover, of all the invaders in India the Muslims were the only people, who led a militant religious crusade upon India. They were full of religious zeal and had come to India with the definite idea of converting others to their own religion and not to be absorbed by others. In fact they were religion-conscious.

Fourthly, from 1200 to 1580 the Muslim State and society in India retained its original military and nomadic character, the ruling race lived merely like an armed camp in the land. As a matter of fact "the muslim settlers in India used to be in the land but not of it." They always preserved their exclusive identity in India and in the twentieth century India had to pay a very high price for it by partitioning the country.

However, the great interaction of the different cultures—Hindu and Muslim—that took place in India has its own significance in history. The contact, fusion and synthesis of two

India through the Ages by J. N. Sarkar, p. 41.

different and dissimilar cultures is according to John Marshall not only remarkable and peculiarly instructive in the history of India but that of mankind also. The following causes contributed to the interaction between the Hindu and Muslim cultures.

Synthesis of the Hindu Muslim Cultures. During the three hundred years of the rule of the Sultans of Delhi, the interaction between the Hindu and Islamic cultures was mostly confined to the prosperous cities and well-to-do upper classes but the Mughal period witnessed a remarkable Hindu Muslim Synthesis. The following factors led to it.

1. *Indispensable support and good-will of the Hindus for peace, law and order.* With all their limited resources the Muslim rulers in India found it difficult to establish a stable and efficient government in a vast foreign country like India. Though they had gained political sovereignty, they could not deprive the Hindus of their economic supremacy. Therefore, they had to seek the co-operation of the Hindus and depend considerably on their good-will and support for a stable government, peace, law and order in the country.

The Muslim sovereigns had neither seasoned diplomats, not experienced administrators, nor farsighted statesmen in their ranks. Their followers were neither farmers, nor businessmen. In fact, the Muslim invaders did not bring with them merchants, agriculturists, artisans and clerks. The Hindus dominated the economic life of the country. Agriculture and business was controlled and managed by them. Clerks and accountants in government offices and revenue collectors in the villages were Hindus. Architecture was done by the Hindu artisans. Hindu Pandits offered advice to the Muslim judges in administering justice. The employment of the Hindus in civil administration and economic persuits was a necessity of Muslim Government. Therefore the good-will and support of the Hindus was indispensable for the Muslim monarchs.

2. *Policy of peace.* The Muslim rulers could not afford to be always in a war-like mood for the establishment and expansion of their kingdom in a foreign country like India. Psychologically the Muslim sovereigns could not constantly

follow the policy of bitter animosity and persecution. Sabre-rattling and gory activities could not be prolonged indefinitely. After blood-shed and unmitigated tyranny they had to act necessarily in the interest of their subjects for peace, prosperity and safety. Necessity compelled them to revert to the pursuit of arts of peaceful life.

3. *Hindu support sought by the Muslim sovereigns for war against the Muslims.* In absence of a strong central power several independent Muslim kingdoms rose in prominence in distant provinces. Frequently wars were waged between the Sultans of Delhi and these independent provincial kingdoms. Thus the Muslim rulers fought stubbornly the Muslims more than they fought the Hindus. The support and co-operation of the Hindus was sought by both sides. The needs of the time compelled the Muslim monarchs to favour the Hindus. Thus various factors compelled even the most zealous and fanatical Muslim sovereigns to be favourably inclined towards the Hindus and their culture.

4. *New converts to Islam.* Hindus, converted to Islam, retained Hindu customs and manners in their new Muslim society. They thus indirectly endeavoured to diffuse Hindu cultural influence in the Islamic society.

5. *Compromising attitude of the Hindus.* The Hindus realised the futility of waging wars with their Muslim masters. They surrendered to the political supremacy of the Muslim rulers, abandoned hostile attitude and began to lead peaceful life. Besides this, they expressed a keen desire to compromise and accommodate the Muslims in their country.

6. *The intelligentsia in the Hindu and Muslim Societies.* The intelligent and broad-minded Hindus and Muslims realised the futility of war and persecution. Muslim scholars and saints began to study Hindu scriptures and mix freely with their Hindu brothers. Hindus also did not lag behind in the study of Muslim philosophy and the Quran. They were trying to understand each other and study the best elements of the culture of the other.

7. *The policy of religious toleration.* With the exception of a few all the Muslim sovereigns abandoned the idea to esta-

blish a secular state. They patronised fine arts and encouraged literature of the Hindus as well as the Muslims. Some of them went to the extent of adopting Hindu religious practices and undertaking pilgrimage to Hindu shrines.

8. *Growth of the spirit of mutual harmony, toleration and co-operation.* With the lapse of time gradually a spirit of harmony, toleration, compromise and co-operation appeared between the Hindus and the Muslims. This smoothed the path for the growth of amity between the two communities. Thus various factors brought about the fusion of the Hindu and Muslim cultures. Several aspects of this synthesis will be dealt with later on in this chapter.

Historians differ about the synthesis of these two cultures. Some scholars hold the opinion that the Hindu religion and society were influenced to the core by the forces of Islamic culture. Contrary to this is the opinion that the Hindu culture, instead of being influenced by Islam, had deeply impressed Islam and its followers. Dr. Tarachand in his book "*The Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*" has enthusiastically supported the former view. He remarks that the mutual intercourse led to mutual understanding. "Not only did Hindu religion, Hindu art, Hindu literature and Hindu science absorb Muslim elements, but the very spirit of Hindu culture and the very stuff of the Hindu mind were also altered."[1] The later view is advocated by scholars like E. B. Havell, Titus, Prof. S. R. Sharma and Dr. A. L. Srivastava. Titus in his book "*Indian Islam*" states that, "...........when all is said there seems to be little doubt that Hinduism has wrought a far greater change in Islam than Islam has wrought in Hinduism which still continues to pursue the even tenure of its way with a complacency and confidence that are amazing." Inspite of the political subjugation in the medieval age, India was culturally so much alive that it was like a tree which gives shade even to that person who cuts off its branches. E. B. Havell remarks, "Islam seized her political capitals, controlled her military forces and appropriated her revenues, but India retained

Influence of Islam on Indian Culture by Dr. Tarachand, p. 127.

what she cherished most, her intellectual empire, and her soul was never subdued." Whatever India lost in the battle-fields was regained by her spiritual forces.

However, the truth lies between the two views. The inter-action or fusion of the two cultures was never rendered complete. The Islamic culture could never transform entirely the Hindu culture. Whatever their mutual influence was exercised or synthesis achieved, it was mostly confined to external phases of life, especially the urban life. The spirit of India and the character of her culture could never be altered completely by Islam. An account of the synthesis of the Hindu-Muslim cultures will be given in the succeeding paragraphs.

The Muslim State and its Government[1]

General Character of Muslim Administratian. The Muslim rulers of India were poor administrators and they lacked constructive genius. They failed to establish in the country an efficient system of administration. As noted above, the character of the administration was devised only to meet the requirements of the daily routine of administration. There were neither large administrative units like the Subas or well organised assessment of land or the collection of revenues as was under the Mughals. On the contrary, the administrative methods were rude and oppressive. The whole empire was in fact a congeries of nearly independent states. The control of the king over the distant provinces was not based on any uniform principle of cohesion ; but it varied from nominal allegiance to complete subjection and dependent on the personality of the Sultan. "As the country was held in military occupation the length of the king's sword was the limit of his sway." The ambitious and powerful governors often looked upon the throne of Delhi as the ultimate goal of their ambition.

As there was no definite rigid law of succession, the death of the Sultan generally meant a signal for civil war. Jalal-ud-Din Khilji, Ghiyas-ud-Din Tughlak and Bahlol Lodhi all became the Sultans by driving the legal heirs away. Such

[1] For details refer to *Some Aspects of Muslim Administration* by Dr. Tripathi ; *The Administration of the Sultanate of Delhi* by Qureshi.

absence of the law of succession often meant anarchy and it introduced the law of the survival of the fittest ; and the fittest was the one who could kill at once all other claimants to the throne. This, therefore, made the lives of those who participated in politics, nasty, brutish and short. However, one can say that the succession to the throne was elective. It frequently rested on the choice of the feudal lords and nobles and it was often seen that the person who was elected was not necessarily a relative of his predecessor.

The Centralised Monarchy. The Muslim State in medieval India was a strong military theocracy. The Sultan was Caesar and Pope combined in one. He exercised the powers of an absolute autocrat. His will was absolute. But his authority was supposed to be limited by the Holy Quran. The hostility of the Hindu States and the Hindu fighting communities, absence of hereditary Muslim aristocracy and popular assemblies and want of strong public opinion made the Sultan a strong autocrat and favoured a powerful centralised monarchy. The Sultan was regarded as the representative of God upon earth and he governed in accordance with the wishes of the priestly class, the Ulemas, who naturally possessed an enormous influence in such a State. Ala-ud-Din Khilji and Muhammad Tughlak were exceptions to this rule.

The Muslim kings of India were sovereigns in their own persons. Instead of acknowledging the Khalifa's power, they struck their own coins and caused the Khutba to be read in their own names and thus declared their independent sovereign authority. Some of them like Muhammad Tughlak took the title of Sultan-Zilab-Ullah or Sultan—the Shadow of God.

Much of the success or failure of the kingdom depended upon the personality of the Sultan. A strong ruler like Ala-ud-Din Khilji could bring under his control the powerful nobles and Ulemas. But under a weak ruler the nobles and provincial governors attempted to establish their independent kingdoms. As there was no law of succession, no Sultan felt safe on the throne of Delhi. Even during the reign of a powerful Sultan like Ala-ud-Din several attempts were made to put him to death and seize the throne of Delhi.

The mainstay of the Muslim State was the military class composed of the Muslims alone. The State being essentially military in character, the Sultan was the Chief Commander of forces, the chief law-giver and the final court of appeal. For the control of the vast empire, curbing of the power of the feudal lords, suppression of international revolts and opposition of the external invasions, the Sultan maintained a huge standing army. Besides the standing army the feudal lords and nobles supplied the Sultan with a large number of soldiers whenever he needed them.

The Muslim State and the non-Mohammedans. The Muslims were the favoured children of the State and were always given preferential treatment. They monopolised all the high offices of the State, whereas the Hindus were not even recruited in the army, inspite of their having such a desire. They suffered many disabilities and had to pay frequently a special tax known as the *Jeziya* or the poll-tax for the protection of their lives and property. The payment of Jeziya was associated with humiliation and degradation. It was also collected very rigidly. Sometimes they were converted to Islam forcibly. Most of the Sultans could not rise above their narrow bigotry and religious fanaticism. They neither sought the co-operation of their Hindu subjects, nor they allowed them to worship in their own way publicly. On the contrary, they tried to crush them in every possible way. The Muslim occupation of India was, therefore, clearly marked by a spirit of intolerance and narrow mindedness which was responsible for the instability of the Muslim kingdoms. 'Toleration under Muslim domination in India in the early Medieval ages was not the rule but the exception.' The Muslim rulers at best were like an armed camp in the land. They together with Muslim divines aimed at reducing the Hindus to the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water. However, there was no continuous planned suppression and no systematic attempt for the extermination of the Hindus.

The spread of Islam. The progress of Islam in India was due very largely to the fact that it was the religion of the dominant power which sometimes enforced it at the point of

the sword among the subject races. The number of the followers of Islam multiplied rapidly during the first three hundred years of the Muslim rule. Various factors contributed towards this increase. Motives of personal gain such as the desire to obtain high office in the state sometimes led men to abandon their own faith. Daily contact with the Muslims, who naturally wielded great influence and power and controlled the wealth, must have induced some to accept Islam. The degrading position assigned to some in the Hindu social system, which made invidious distinctions between man and man, must have forced them to embrace Islam and be exempted from the payment of *Jeziya*. Voluntary conversions to Islam, grounded on the appreciation of its tenets, were few and far between. Many times forcible conversions were ordered by the Muslim State authorities leading to the spread of Islam rapidly.

Muslim Administration—Central Government. There was a regular hierarchy of officers in charge of various departments who carried out their respective duties according to the Sultan's order who was, generally, the pivot of the whole administrative machinery. The Sultan carried on the administration with the help of his ministers. The Wazir was the chief minister whose powers were not well defined. These depended on his own abilities as well as the character of the Sultan. Generally he was in charge of the finance department and exercised supervision over all the other civil departments of the government. There were five main departments—Revenue, War, Local and Provincial Government, Markets and Agriculture and the Justice. The *Diwan-i-Wazarata* or Revenue Minister dealt mainly with finance. He controlled and supervised the work of the *Amils* or tax-collectors and determined the share of the state in the produce. The *Ariz-i-mamalik* or the Minister in charge of the department of war looked after the recruitment of the army and feudal contingents and organised the transport and commissariat. The *Diwan-i-insha* or the Minister in charge of the provincial government was to be in touch with Governors of the districts and provinces. He was to receive their communications, put them before the Sultan and take his orders thereon. The Minister in charge of the Markets etc., issued licences to

traders. He got octroi duties collected, and dealt with famine and other cognate questions of the kingdom. The Minister of Justice or Chief Sadar supervised the work of the *Qazis* who administered justice and other officers associated with the Department of Justice. He also looked after the department called the *Diwan-i-rasalat* which dealt with religious matters and endowments.

The Royal Household. There were many important officers of the royal household. The chief official was called the Wakil-i-dar. He controlled the entire royal household, including the royal kitchen, the stables and the *sharabkhana.* Another important officer was the Amir-i-hajib, who was the master of ceremonies at the court.

Revenue. Land revenue, irrigation cess, one-fifth of the spoils of war, import duties and other taxes like the house tax, grazing tax, water tax and poll tax or *Jeziya* formed the important sources of revenue. The demand for land revenue was one-fifth of the produce, but later on raised to one-half.

Police and Justice. Justice was administered by the Qazi-ul-Quzat or the Lord Chief Justice, aided by Muftis. Qazis dispensed justice in cities and provinces. The Muhtasib, an officer of the Municipal police, kept a strict watch on the conduct of the people. The Kotwal, in charge of the police department, was the custodian of peace and order. The Penal Law was excessively severe, the penalties of mutilation and death being usually inflicted on the culprits.

The Army. It consisted of the royal body-guard, and the troops of the capital reinforced by the levies sent by the provincial viceroys and the contingents of Hindu troops. The main branches of the army were the infantry including archers, the cavalry and the elephants. There was nothing like artillery which came to be used in later times. But the cavalry formed the back-bone of the army.

Court. The Delhi Sultans maintained a court. But it was not so splendid as that of the great Mughals. Culture of a rather limited type was patronised in these courts.

Provincial Administration. Each province was 'replica of the Empire', and was placed in charge of a great noble who

exercised absolute power within his jurisdiction. Provincial governorships practically amounted to viceroyalties which tended to become hereditary. The provincial governors were required to defend their frontiers and to manage their internal affairs. Their relation with the Sultan consisted mainly in paying the tribute regularly and tendering homage respectfully. Occasionally they had to provide military aid. When these services were performed regularly and properly the governors were left undisturbed in their provinces and there was nothing to limit their powers. The constant intrigues of the nobles, and lack of healthy co-operation among the officers generally hampered the good working of the provincial government and consequently peace and order were not perfectly maintained. The control of the Sultan over the provincial governments was lax and ill-defined and the absolute power with which the governors were entrusted very often induced them to defy the central imperial authority. Each province was divided into *Shiqqs* which in their turn were divided into *paraganas*, collections of villages.

Village Administration. There is, however, one redeeming feature in the administration of the Muslim kings and that is, they did not disturb the ancient local institutions of the people of the land. The village with its self-governing institutions remained untouched. The officers of the State never interfered in the normal working of the rural administration, nor was it affected any way by the political revolutions and civil wars at Delhi. The village republics were left undisturbed and independent in the management of their own affairs. Local administration was left discretely to the village Panchayats.

The Muslim Nobility. The Muslim nobility wielded 'a predominant influence in the State as generals, administrators and sometimes as king-makers. But it was not a hereditary, homogeneous and well-organised body' Though the Turks formed the majority in the nobility, there were in it also men of other foreign nationalities, like Arabs, Afghans, Abyssinians, Egyptians, etc. Some Indian nobles also held high position. Such a heterogeneous class could never be expected to work with common aim or principle and provide a healthy or sound check to absolutism of the Sultans. "The nobility was nothing

more than a mere agglomeration of disintegrating atoms which failed to evolve a workable constitution for the country."

Criticism. The Turko-Afghan machinery of administration, as outlined briefly above, lacked the general will of the nation, and the habitual obedience of the people, derived from tradition. Its theocratic, military and feudal character was opposed to the traditional ancient government of the land. By the nature of its growth, it could seldom be established on the goodwill and support of the people. In fact, a tie of mutual attachment between the rulers and the masses was in many cases absent. There was a wide gulf between the ruler and the ruled. The state grew on military strength, its rulers were mainly concerned to adopt measure to safeguard and strengthen their own authority and its aristocracy, having no consistent policy, pursued selfish interest and in course of time grew more ambitious and turbulent. Such a state could not but collapse.[1]

Economic Conditions

The State did not pursue any comprehensive sound economic policy which aimed at the improvement of the general condition of the people. Though the Khiljis and the Tughlaks made a few experiments, they did not produce permanent results. "On the whole, any big improvement in the method of production, a more equitable distribution of the economic wealth, or a better adjustment of the economic position of the various social classes, was outside the policy of the State." Most of the Sultans did not consider it their duty to devote their energy and attention or utilise state recources for the economic prosperity and general benefit of the people. However, the Sultans of Delhi and the minor provincial rulers and governors encouraged industries and trade not for general economic prosperity but for their own political and administrative needs. But there were no factories or big manufacturing concerns or large-scale industrial organisations as India has to-day. Though agriculture formed the occupation of the bulk of the people of the land there were some important industries in the urban as well as rural areas of the country. These were

An Advanced History of India by Majumdar and others, p. 396.

the textile industry (manufacture of cotton, woollen and silk cloth), metal, stone and brick works and the industries of paper, dyeing and the sugar. There were minor industries making cups, shoes and arms. Manufacture of scents, spirits and liquors etc., was also very popular.

The volume of India's internal trade 'was large except when thwarted by the monopoly of the State or rigid administrative control.' As regards her external trade she had commercial relations with the distant regions of Europe, the Malaya Islands and China, and other countries of the east on the Pacific Ocean. Through her ancient land routes, India had her commercial intercourse with Central Asia, Afghanistan, Persia, Tibet and Bhutan. The chief imports were articles of luxury, horses and mules ; and the main exports consisted of varieties of agricultural goods and textile manufactures. Opium and indigo were exported in large quantities. Some countries situated round the Persian Gulf in the west were entirely dependent on India for their food supply. Indian goods were exported chiefly from the harbours of Gujrat and Bengal.

As regards the standard of living of the different classes, the difference between that of the wealthier classes and of the peasants in the country was "almost antipodal". The nobility and ruling and official classes enjoyed high standard of living. They rolled in opulence and luxury, but the peasants had a very low standard of living. Probably the incidence of taxation weighed heavily on them and their condition became miserable in times of famine or scarcity caused by drought or heavy rains. Farmers of medieval India do not seem to have been much better off than their descendants of modern times. But, judged by modern standards, they had fewer needs. As the village was economically self-sufficient, the simple requirements of the rural population were supplied locally to their satisfaction. Again, inspite of political revolutions and conspiracies at the metropolis, the villagers followed their ordinary usual occupation of life in utter disregard and indifference to the political upheavals. Court politics seldom disturbed the even tenor of village life.[1]

Ibid, p. 399.

Effect of the Impact of the Indian and the Islamic Civilisations

As noted above, so immense was the assimilative potentiality of the old Hindu culture and civilisation that the earlier invaders of India like the Greeks, the Sakyas, the Huns, etc. were easily absorbed within the fold of her population and in due course they completely lost their identity. But it did not happen so with the Turko-Afghan invaders of the country. In the wake of Muslim invasions new different and definite social and religious ideas were brought into India and it was not possible to achieve a perfect absorption of these conceptions. But it is a fact of history that whenever two different types of civilisation and culture come into close contact with each other and remain associated for centuries, both are bound to be influenced mutually. Thus, long association, the growth of the converted Indo-Muslim community and its mixing freely with the Hindu community, the demand for peace, justice, security and proper government, the spirit of tolerance, the desire to admire and assimilate each other's customs, broader and tolerating outlook af the Hindu and Muslim saints and their attempts to unify the two communities, the Muslim ruler's liberal patronage to fine arts and letters, and the influence of several liberal movements in medieval India led the Hindu and the Muslim communities to imbibe each other's thoughts, traditions and customs and consequently many important social changes took place.

Political subjection and social degradation of the Hindus, but their predominating influence continued. The Hindus, under Muslim domination, fretted and chaffed at the loss of their political power. Their political subjection was followed by social degradation. They were looked upon as the worst enemies of the alien government that had been established in their midst. They were over-taxed, were excluded with rare exception from high offices, were treated with severity and reduced to a state of abject misery and had to live like helots within the empire. Alauddin's aim was to reduce the Hindus to such a condition that they should not be able to ride on horse-back, wear fine clothes, carry arms aud enjoy luxury. They had to groan under heavy religious disabilities, had to

suffer active persecution frequently and were required to pay usually a special tax called *Jeziya*. Some of the Hindus to escape this tax embraced Islam. Under such circumstances, the Hindu talent naturally became stunted and dwarfed and got little or no opportunity of developing to its fullest extent in the sphere of politics.

Inspite of all this, the structure of economic life in the country was dominated by the Hindus. It was the muslim army that occupied Delhi and destroyed the Hindu monarchies. The Muslim invaders did not bring with them cultivators and though the lands were given in *jagir* to the Amirs, the cultiva-ing classes remained Hindu. Nor was conversion on such an elaborate scale as to displace the Hindu Zamindar and the Hindu cultivator. The land system in fact did not change and therefore the Hindus in general in the country led fairly the same life as they had led before inspite of the Muslim domination.

Again, commerce and trade did not change hands to any considerable extent. The Muslim invaders were military adventurers who despised trade and failed to understand the elaborate Hindu credit system on which the business of the whole country was based. The commercial classes were undoubtedly mulcted heavily under the Muslim rule, but the Hindu *Baniya* or merchant remained then as now a necessary element in the structure of the society in the medieval age.

Besides this, the lower ranks of the bureaucracy had of necessity to be Hindus during the Muslim rule. The Muslims being the favoured children of the State were accorded a preferential treatment. They monopolised the higher offices, but being unskilled administrators the lower rungs of officialdom had of necessity to be Hindus. The Patwaris, the accountants, the treasurers and others in the districts were invariably Hindus, while the Governors, police officials, judges and district officials were Muslims. Inspite of the Muslim domination, the employment of the Hindu bureaucracy continued Moreover, the despotism and wrath of the Delhi Sultans used to fall mainly on the courtiers, nobles and provincial governors. This led to feudal disputes, atrocities and continuous revolts of the governors. Consequently the Sultans had to carry on constant campaigns

against the Muslim nobles, governors and their armies. This rendered the Central Government weak but it hardly affected the Hindus. They were left a great deal more to themselves in the rural areas.

As regards religion, one is surprised to note that in face of Islam's conquest of north India, the Hindu religion was strong enough to maintain its hold on the minds of the people. Everything was open to a Hindu who embraced Islam. He could get the highest office of the State if he deserved so. Some of the highest officers including Malik Kafur, Khusrau and Hemu were converted Hindus. With the short cut to prosperity and power so clearly marked out for Hindus, it is surprising that Muslims today in the Uttar Pradesh (United Provinces), which was continuously under the rule of the Muslim sovereigns for six hundred years, number only fourteen per cent. Hindu religion withstood the shock of Islam. It continued to survive. Even more than this, under the most bigoted Sultans like Alauddin and Firoz Tughlak, the Hindu religious leaders and saints received royal honour and recognition. Jain sources enable us to know that Sultan Alauddin Khilji held religious discourses with Acharya Mahasena who was brought from the Karnataka for the purpose. It is also reported that the Digambara Jain, Purna Chandra of Delhi and the Swetambara ascetic Ramchandra Suri were in favour with the same Sultan. Ghiasuddin Tughlak had two Jain officers who exercised great influence over him, while Firoz held in high honour the poet Ratnasekhara.'

Though the plight of the Hindus was miserable, but their depression did not last very long. The resistance to Muslim invasions during the days of conquest was organised by the Rajputs and kept up with continuous heroism for a period of four hundred years. After the fall of the Chauhans of Delhi at the hands of Muhammad Ghori, the Hindu leadership was claimed by the Sisodia Dynasty of Mewar. Its famous ruler Kumbha (1433-68) and his successors were the champions of Hindu revival which apart from saving large areas from Muslim conquest put heart into the Hindu people of other areas in northern India. Beyond Rajasthan Hindu influence also began to assert itself and by the fourteenth century even in the Gangetic Valley the great Hindu landlords or zamindars had

come to have enough influence, power and authority to rebel against the Imperial Government when it became weak, and we have evidence to prove that the Sultans had to put down with a strong hand the revolts of Zamindars.

Impact of the Hindus on the Muslim Society. In the early centuries of the Muslim rule, Mohammedans lived in India as a garrison in a hostile country, holding little or no intercourse with their Hindu subjects. But it was inevitable that with the lapse of time the barriers between the two should be relaxed if not broken down entirely. Consequently the mutual intercourse between the two communities influenced the culture of the both. The following paragraphs will reveal how the Muslim society was influenced by the Hindus and their religion. Being the subjects of Muslim State, the Muslims were the favoured children of the state, while the Hindus suffered many disabilities. Most of the high offices of the State were reserved for the Mohammedans. However, the easy acquisition of the enormous wealth and the participation in the festivities of the court led to great vices among the Muslims and made the ruling class led a life of luxury and pleasure. This sapped the manliness and vigour of the Muslim community.

Many Muslim conquerors married Hindu women, queens and princesses. Alauddin married the Hindu princess Kamla Devi, wife of Karna Deva the Raja of Gujrat, and later on her daughter by the first marriage was wedded to his eldest son Khizor Khan. The Hindu women introduced their social customs and rites in their new homes. The influence of the Hindu women in Mohammedan harems was one of the factors which brought reconciliation between Islam and Hinduism. Havell observes, "The traditional devotion and the tenderness of Indian motherhood helped greatly to soften the ferocity of the Turki and Mughal nomad." Some scholars are of the opinion that Muslim morality was highly influenced by Hindu thought and customs. "Muslims became practically monogamous by a curious process which made divorce impossible. Remarriage of widows became rare under Hindu influence." Apart from this, contact with Hindu society brought about the rise of class distinctions and differences among the Muslims. Some of the Sultans of Delhi never appointed any but men of noble birth

to high offices. Balban, the famous slave Sultan, never countenanced upstarts. The conception of the caste-system was gradually developed among the Muslims. Mutual contact developed new castes and sub-castes. Various classes of the Muslims began to reside separately in different localities even in the same town, for example Sheikhs and Sayyids. The lower functional groups were organised on the model of the Hindu caste-system with their *Panchayats* or caste-councils and officers to enforce the observance of caste rules by the time-honoured sanction of boycotting. Mutual jealousies among the foreign and Indian Muslim nobles and Amirs of the Sultan developed caste like groups in the higher and aristocractic Muslim society. The conception of untouchability evolved in due course in the Muslim society. The lower caste persons of the Hindu society were converted to Islam in large numbers due to the tyranny of the caste-system, the prospects of escape from the poll-tax and other social advantages. These new converts were treated like untouchables in the Muslim society. They were given neither any share in the administration nor any place in the Muslim aristocracy. They were neither treated on a footing of equality with other Muslims nor could enjoy power with higher Muslims. So they retained their Hindu mode of life to a great extent and avoided the eating of beaf and widow-remarriage and continued to express reverence to local gods in subdued tone. Even today Muslim villagers consult the Hindu astrologer and propitiate the local gods in the times of troubles.

It has been said that many features in the princely life and court ceremonies were borrowed by the Muslim rulers from the Hindus. They were probably adopted on account of the presence of the Hindu nobles and officials of the higher services in the Muslim courts. The gorgeous paraphernalia of the courts of the Rajput princes was borrowed by the Muslim rulers. The royal custom of *nyochhawar*, passing over of the gold and silver coins thrice over the head of the ruler and offering them to the menials and poor persons, is a Hindu court etiquette followed by the Muslims. The adoption of new court etiquette led to the growth of particular seating arrangements in the court for different classes of orders. They were

classified into Ahl-i-daulet, the ruling class proper, Ahl-i-sa'adat, the intelligentsia, and Ahl-i-murad or the pleasure seeking class. As wealth increased in Muslim court and society, the hold of religion became somewhat weaker and consequently superstition, ignorance and evil practices began to gain ground. Sultan Firozshah in his *Fatuha-i-Firozshahi* refers to several heretical sects which he suppressed with a high-hand and the leaders of which he caused to be arrested and imprisoned or put to death. The Hindu superstition of the evil eye (*nazar*), '*the Utara*' and the ceremony of *Arti*—which was termed by the Muslims '*Nisar*', had taken deep root in the Muslim society. The ceremony of *Nisar* was performed by taking platefuls of gold and silver coins or precious jewels and passing them repeatedly (not less than seven times) over the head of the sovereign and then they were scattered or distributed among the poor persons, beggars or any other assemblage of servants. The Hindus had cultivated the institution of the hereditary *Maths* with their *gurus* and *chelas*. The Muslims adopted it for their saints and evolved the office of the *Pir* or *Shaikh* and his descendants. Like the Hindus the Muslims began to keep faith in vows (*Manatas* or *Minnats*) and they approached Hindu *Yogis* and *Sadhus* or hermits for the fulfilment of their long cherished desires. Muslim sovereigns like Muhammad Tughlak went with gifts to the Hindu saints and sages to get his inmost desire fulfilled. With regard to the idol-worship, the Indian Muslims have been nearer to the Hindus of India, as compared to the Muslims of the foreign countries. The reverence for and worship of tombs of *pirs* or saints is seen among the Indian Muslims. Worship of the *Pir* is another form of the Hindu practice of *Guru puja*. The Muslims perform rites at the tombs of the *pirs* or saints who are believed to have the power of averting disease or disaster or any other evils.

There are references to the Rajput *Jauhar* custom adopted by the Muslims. Kamaluddin, the Governor of Bhatnair, and his followers advanced to fight Timur after burning their women folk and their property. The Muslims adopted many Hindu customs of daily routine life. The Hindu turban became very popular among the Muslims. The Muslim rulers and nobles had to modify their dress to suit Indian environ-

ment and climate. The Hindu habit of daily bath and personal hygiene before performing any religious ceremony was followed by the Mohammedans. Many salient features of Hindu festivals and ceremonies were assimilated in the Muslim society. According to Ashraf Shabe-Barat, the 'Guy Fawkes Day of Islam' is copied from the Hindu festival of *Shivaratri*. It was readily spread far and wide. It has been said that the Muslims in India admired and assimilated Hindu customs and traditions to such an extent that the pious Muslim invader Timur made it an excuse for attacking the territory of the Muslim Kingdom of Delhi.

In the realm of administration the Muslim rulers retained in fact many of the Hindu institutions of Government specially in the departments of revenue and finance. They followed the Hindu practice of using war elephants in the open battles. In view of the above-stated facts Titus has rightly remarked in his book '*Indian Islam*' that "Hinduism has wrought a far greater change in Islam than Islam has wrought in Hinduism." Though the political subjugation and humiliation of the Hindus could not break their belief in their cultural and racial superiority and they looked down on their foreign conquerors with deep contempt and treated them as *Mlechhas* or untouchables, they assimilated some features of the culture of the new conquerors.

Impact of Islam on Hindu society. In fact the Hindu society could not remain unaffected by the social customs and religion of its new rulers. The Muslim occupation of India accelerated certain undesirable tendencies that had already manifested themselves in the Hindu society on the eve of the Muslim conquest. The following examples will bear testimony to this statement. The birth of a girl was looked upon as an inauspicious event. Consequently infanticide spread widely among the Hindus. It was a measure adopted by the Hindus so that their virgins might not run the risk of losing their chastity at the hands of the Muslims. Many Hindu chiefs and well-to-do persons were compelled to offer their daughters in marriage to the Turkish Sultans, their nobles and followers. The Parda system, seclusion of women, unknown in early days of the Hindu rule, was introduced elaborately into the Hindu

society and women generally lived in seclusion in the sphere of their homes. They now moved on outside their houses in the palanquins covered with curtains. In the royal harems of the Hindu rulers and princes the parda system was rigidly enforced. We have references to the queens of Raja Rudra Pratap of Puri who used to visit Chaitanya in covered palanquins. Early marriage of the Hindu girls to avoid their kidnapping by the Muslims became the fashion of the day. The numerous social taboos and restrictions regarding caste, marriage, eating and drinking had become all the more stringent among the Hindus. It is true that such a social structure was incapable of any progress, its very rigidity and stiffness served as a strong cordon which protected the Hindus from being submerged entirely in the new Islamic culture. The condition of the Hindu women deteriorated considerably. Dependence of women on their husbands or other male relatives became a prominent feature of the Hindu society. Though they enjoyed a position of respect they could not command equal rights with men and were not allowed to participate in all the social functions and ceremonies. Women were expected to observe strict fidelity in their conjugal life. To safeguard their honour and chastity against the Muslims the customs of *Jauhar* and *Sati* both were widely prevalent throughout the country among the Hindus. But according to Ibn Batutah a sort of permit had to be obtained from the Sultan of Delhi before the burning of a wife on the pyre of her husband.

An unhealthy feature of social life that crept into the Hindu society due to the Muslims was slavery. Slavery was common in the Muslim society and to keep slaves was a recognised fashion of the time. It was a well-known common practice with the Delhi Sultans, their nobles and Amirs to maintain slaves both male as well as female. The number of royal slaves was generally large. It it reported that Alauddin had 84,000 slaves and their number rose to 2,00,000 under Sultan Firoz Tughlak. Besides a pretty large number of Indian slaves many male and female slaves were imported from foreign countries like Persia, China and Turkistan and all these were maintained by the Sultans at the cost of the State. The Hindu leaders and feudal lords adopted the institution of slavery. The royal harems and

palaces in Rajasthan even today practice the system of slavery. Women slaves are offered in dowry even now among the Rajput royal families. The institution of slavery might have served certain useful purpose of service and pecuniary gains for the kings and amirs, but it produced some banful social results. In fact it was a stamp of unprogressiveness, inhuman feature and unhealthy element in society.

Another result of the contact with the Muslims was that Mohammedan dress, etiquette and ceremonial came into fashion in the Hindu society. Gambling and wine drinking which were the common vices of the Muslim society of the age, were followed by the Hindus. The Hindu rulers adopted the Muslim etiquette and seating arrangement for various classes as practised in the Delhi court.

Another social result of the introduction of Islam and Muslim rule in India as pointed by K.M. Panikkar was the division of society on a vertical basis. Before the thirteenth century Hindu society was divided horizontally. Neither Buddhism nor Jainism could affect this division but both were easily assimilated. On the contrary, Islam split Indian society into two distinct divisions from top to bottom—Hindus and Muslims. In due course these two sections evolved as two separate nations in the same country. Seeds were sown in the medieval age for the two nation-theory. Two parallel societies were vertically established on the same soil. At all stages they were different in all walks of life. Besides this, the proselytising zeal of Islam strengthened bonds of conservatism in the orthodox circles of the Hindu society. The Hindus became more orthodox in their outlook and practice than what they were in the past. To fortify their position against the propagation and spread of Islam, the Hindus increased to a great extent the stringency of many social taboos and caste rules. New rigid rules of conduct, diet, marriage and religious rites and ceremonies were prescribed. They formulated a large number of rules in the Smiriti works to strengthen the Hindu social body. The increased rigidity of the caste-system and new regulations produced far reaching consequences in the Hindu society. First, it was possible to safeguard the Hindu culture against the alien Islamic culture. Second, initiative and continuous progress disappeared from the life of the

Hindus. Their social structure was rendered incapable of any growth. Third, lower-castes found their lot more miserable. They were being crushed between the millstones of social and religious tyranny of the higher classes and the politico-religious tyranny of the Muslim fanatics. Therefore conversion to Islam was an easy escape from such suffocating and soul-crushing atmosphere. Some liberal Hindu leaders and reformers were opposed to the increased conservatism of the Hindu society and rigidity of the caste system. They favoured concessions to the higher classes who were reclaimed to the Hindu society. They borrowed some democratic principles of Islam and advocated equality of castes. They declared that caste was not a bar to salvation and thus promoted the growth of a popular and liberal religion especially the Bhakti cult.

The Hindu society was confronted at this time with the problem of social adjustment. The Islamic invasions necessitated the Hindu social reconstruction. Defensively the Hindu society was to be strengthened and the *smritis* to be recast to make apostacy difficult, and at the same time to make provision for taking those back into society who were forcibly removed from it.[1] Consequently for defensive purposes society became more rigid in its rules and regulations, more violent in its reactions towards non-confirmity ; in fact, it became reactionary. On the other hand, it attempted to find a solution for problems which the original law-givers could not have dreamt of. It is not surprising, therefore, if we find voluminous commentaries on the *Smritis* and *nibandhas* (digests) by the Hindus during the period between 1200-1500. To put it plainly, this period was the heyday of writers on Smritis, as the adjustment of social relationships had become an important problem. Deval who flourished in Sind and Medhadhiti who himself had witnessed the Muslim raids had to deal with the problem of social adjustment in their writings. Deval endeavoured to solve the problem of conversion of the persons of higher castes who were enslaved by the Muslims. According to some historians Vijnaneswara, the author of great *Mitakshara* Smriti, cannot flourish earlier than the twelfth century. Kalluka,

[1] *A Survey of Indian History* by K. M. Panikkar, p. 166.

a famous Bengali commentator of Manu *Smriti*, lived in the fourteenth century. Chandeswara who wrote many digests of Smritis was a contemporary of Alauddin Khilji in the early fourteenth century. Madhva of Vijayanagar, the commentator of *Parasara Smriti*, and Visveswara, the author of a Smriti called *Madanaparijata*, and Raghunandan of Bengal who was a contemporary of Chaitanya flourished in this period. Dr. A.L. Srivastava holds the opinion that the character, conduct and dignity of the Hindus were adversely affected by the rule of the Delhi Sultans. When higher and middle class Hindus came into close contact with their alien rulers, they were compelled to conceal their sentiments of time-honoured customs, culture and religion and in due course they developed servility of character to get on in the world. They abandoned honesty and sincerity, straightforwardness and integrity of character and imbibed vices like selfish cleverness and skill in deceit or evasion.

Growth of the spirit of mutual harmony, co-operation and toleration and the synthesis of Hindu-Muslim cultures. Inspite of the fundamental differences and bitter strife between Hindus and Muslims, beneath the ruffled surface of storm and stress, there began to flow a genial current of mutual harmony, co-operation and toleration in different spheres of life in course of time. Both the Hindus and the Muslims realised, with the lapse of time, the futility of war and persecution. Gradually a spirit of harmony, fellow-feeling and co-operation was appearing between the two communities. They endeavoured to understand each other. Consequently not only Hindu art, Hindu religion, Hindu literature and science assimilated certain Muslim elements but the very spirit of Hindu culture was transformed to some extent. In the same way the Muslims also attempted to absorb keenly many elements of the Hindu culture. They willingly offered themselves for mutual exchange of ideas. If the Hindu religious leaders and saints endeavoured to synthesise the Hindu-Muslim thoughts, the sufi sect of the Muslims, their writers and poets adopted Hindu doctrines and followed many of their traditions. Famous Muslim scholars and saints began to labour for the dissemination of the ideas of Islamic philosophy and mysticism in India and it has been proved that one of the

sources of Muslim mysticism was Indian. The healthy spirit of mutual toleration found expression in the growing veneration of the Hindus for the Muslim saints, particularly of the mystic school, and a corresponding Mohammedan practice of venerating Hindu saints and ultimately it led to the common worship of *Satyapir* (the true saint). The Hindus offered sweets with great pleasure on the tombs of Muslim *pirs* or saints and listened with reverence to the recitations of the *Quran*. They began to believe in the infallibility of the Quran, consult it as an oracle and keep a copy of it in their houses to ward off the evils in life. To express their sentiments of brotherhood and charity, they commenced feeding the Muslim *fakirs* and *shaikhs* and began to observe Muslim festivals and fairs. They took pride in becoming the disciples of Muslim saints. We have references to the Brahman disciples of Abdul Kadir Jilani in Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan) and the Hindu devotees of Sayyid Masud in Bahraich. Similarly a large number of Hindus were included among the devotees of Shaikh Muinuddin Chisti of Ajmer. His tomb at Ajmer known as the *dargah* of Khwajah Sahib is the centre of attraction for thousands of Muslims and hundreds of Hindus. When the death anniversary of Muinuddin is celebrated in a festival form called *Urs* both Hindus and Muslims visit the tomb in thousands even to-day. Similarly the tomb of Shah Badi-ud-Din Qutb-ul-Madar at Makanpur in Kanpur district is visited by thousands of Hindus and Muslims. To respond to the Hindu sentiments the Muslims were also favourably inclined towards Hinduism. Though they were opposed bitterly to the idol-worship yet in Bengal they followed the practice of worshipping the Hindu gods and goddesses like *Sita*, *Kali*, *Dharmraj*, *Vaidyanath* etc. Muslims in U. P. worship Kalka Sahja Mai, the Mirasis of Amritsar worship Durga Bhawani, while the Turk Nawas of Bengal Laxmi Devi. New gods like Khwaja Khijra and Jindagaji were created by the Muslims. It is said that Husain Shah, the Muslim ruler of Gaud, instituted the common worship of new god *Satyapir*. Muslim kings in the provinces liberally granted endowments to the Hindu temples and their shrines. The nucleus of the large Zamindari of the Mahant of Bodh Gaya was a grant made by Mohammad Shah. In Kash-

mir Sultan Zain-ul-Abdin frequently visited the famous Hindu shrine of Amarnath and Sharda Devi's temple and had erected there rest-houses to provide comforts to the pilgrims. Being influenced by the mythology of the Hindu Puranas and the Epics, the Muslims invented myths and legends which the pristine Islam lacked. They could now sing of the glorious deeds of Hanifa, a legendary brother of Hassan and Hussain Ali. He was raised to the status of mythical hero combining the roles of Bhima and Arjun, renowned heroes of a Hindu Epic. They also invented the character of Amir Ummiya to serve as the counterpart of Hanuman, a great hero of the Ramayan and devotee of Shri Ram.

The spirit of harmony, toleration and co-operation also found expression in the growing attempts of some Muslim aristocrats to assimilate Hindu customs, religious beliefs and observances while living in Hindu environment. Many sections of the Muslims even today retain several Hindu practices. The Memons of Saurashtra live like Hindus. They neither eat fish nor practise circumcision. They worship Hindu triad Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and regard Iman Shah as the incarnation of Brahma. Similarly the Shamis in the Punjab worship Agha Khan as an incarnation of Hindu trinity. Many Muslims have retained the joint-family system of the Hindus. The Moplas are governed in Malabar by the Hindu laws. Several social functions of the Hindus at the time of birth, marriage and death have been adopted by the Muslims. They practise them even today, for example the custom of singing of songs at the time of birth of a male child, the pomp, procession, ceremonies, festivities and even jokes of the Hindus in marriage and the use of certain Hindu ornaments. Dr. Rajendra Prasad in his book "*India Divided*" gives numerous instances to prove that Muslims assimilated many of the Hindu practices.[1] A large number of intermarriages between the ruling members of the two communities, though tainted with compulsion as a condition of conquest, helped a good deal for the spirit of assimilation, harmony and toleration to grow and 'did much to soften the

India Divided by Dr. Rajendra Prasad, pp. 38-48.

acrimonious differences between the two communities and assist the transplanting of the customs of the one to the fold of the other.'

The feeling of friendliness and the desire for mutual understanding induced Muslims to study, translate or summarise Hindu sanskrit literature in the Muslim courts like those of Hussain Shah and Nasir Shah of Bengal and Zain-ul-Abdin of Kashmir. Some Muslim courts, Muslim scholars, preachers, and saints began to study Hindu philosophy like *Yoga* and *Vedanta*. Many were attracted to the study of Hindu sciences of medicine and astrology. Similarly the Hindu astronomers "borrowed from the Muslims technical terms, the Muslim calculation of latitudes and longitudes, some items of the calendar (Zich) and a branch of horoscopy called *Tajik* and in medicine the knowledge of metallic acids and some processes in Iatro-Chemistry."[1]

As a result of the Hindu-Muslim contact there gradually emerged a linguistic synthesis and Urdu is the outcome of the mingling of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and ideas with languages and concepts of Sanskritic origin. In course of time Urdu became the *lingua-franca* of the people. Hindu and Muslim writers and poets of the age exchanged ideas mutually and expressed their thoughts in the vernaculars, Urdu and the Persian language. Muslim scholars like Amir Khusrau, Malik Muhammad Jayasi, Kutuban etc. wrote on Hindu life, culture and religion in Hindi. Hindu writers like Rai Bhanamal wrote in Persian on Muslim ideas and literary traditions. The advent of the Muslims and the spirit of harmony and toleration had the profound effect on the growth of the Indian vernacular literature. Shri Dinesh Chandra Sen in his book on the evolution of Bengali literature remarks that, "This elevation of Bengali to a literary status was brought about by several influences, of which the Mohammedan conquest was undoubtedly one of the foremost."[2] Through the efforts of the Muslim rulers of Bengal

[1] *Advanced History of India* by Dr. R.C. Majumdar and others, p. 401.

[2] *History of Bengali Language and Literature* by Dinesh Chandra Sen, p. 10.

Bengali came into its own. The Hindi language also could not escape the Muslim influence which is distinct in its vocabulary, grammar, metres, similes and styles.

The spirit of assimilation and synthesis between the Hindu and Islamic cultures led to the evolution of new styles of architecture and music, "in which the basic elements remained the old Hindu, but the finish and outward form became Persian and the purpose served was that of Muslim courts." New arts and crafts were introduced in the country, for example paper-making, enamelling, inlay work of stones, metals and jewels etc. Numerous *Karkhanas* or workshops were set up for gold and silver articles and embroidery.

The spirit of harmony and co-operation was also visible in the political field. Besides retaining intact the existing Hindu machinery of local administration, the Muslim rulers sometimes employed a large number of Hindus. They distinguished themselves in different branches of administration and became prominent and popular, for example Medini Rai of Chanderi and his friends. They occupied very high positions at Mandu in Malwa. Husain Shah in Bengal employed such prominent Hindu men as Purandar Khan, Rup and Sanatan. In the Deccan the Sultans of Golkunda had Hindu ministers who rendered meritorious services to the Golkunda State. Distinguished Hindus were entrusted with offices of responsibility by Sultan Yusuf Adil Shah of Bijapur. Another Sultan of Bijapur Ibrahim Adil Shah liberally patronised the Hindus. Moreover, the records of the State were ordinarily kept in Marathi, the language of the masses in the State. Some of the Muslim Sultans freely granted endowments to Hindu shrines. Examples of Hindu toleration and Rajput chivalry towards the Muslims are equally abundant. Rana Kumbha, the renowned Rajput hero and ruler of Chittor, respected the independence of his vanquished foe Mahmud Khilji II, the Sultan of Malwa. Though the Sultan was captured by the victorious Rajputs, Rana Kumbha treated him with chivalrous generosity and soon restored Mahmud to his Kingdom. Hindu rulers appointed Muslims to offices of trust and responsibility and employed many Muslims as soldiers. Rana Sangram Singh had a con-

tingent of Muslim troops under him in his war against Babar. Rana Hamir of Ranthambhor had employed Mir Muhammad Shah who fought to death bravely and loyally against Alauddin Khilji for the cause of his master. Besides this, Hamir sheltered at the risk of incurring Alauddin's wrath a rebel chief who had fled from the Sultan's court at Delhi. Similarly Rana Ban Pal of Santur offered shelter to Qutlugh Khan after his defeat at the hands of Sultan Nasiruddin. Even the Vijaynagar Emperors in the Deccan not only employed Muslims in their army but patronised liberally "the cause of Islam in and outside their capital." These official appointments were more probably due to political necessity than to spirit of toleration or any feeling of accomodation. But undoubtedly they facilitated a healthy growth of goodwill and friendliness between the Muslims and Hindus.

Religion

Impact of Islam upon Hinduism. In the beginning of the period under review Islam gave a very rude shock to Hinduism. It shattered the Brahman supremacy and destroyed the royal patronage that Hinduism had been enjoying. Hindu religious monuments and temples were levelled to the ground and Hinduism being deprived of the State-patronage could not evolve further. Its growth was stunted, but Islam was spread far and wide in the country. The great contribution of the Muslim royal dynasties of Delhi was the introduction and propagation of Islam in India. 'Besides its doctrinal aspects, Islam brought into India a conception of human equality, a pride in one's religion, a legal system which in many ways was an advance on the codes of the time.' The strongly egalitarian outlook of Islam and the deep faith and the pride of the Mohammedans in their religion had their repercussions on Hindu society and religion. The new spirit which the Hindu rulers of Rajasthan and Vijaynagar Emperors displayed as champions of *Dharam* and the upholders of religion was a direct outcome of contact with Islam. They championed the cause of Hindu religion and society. To support and safeguard religion was the main function of Rana Hamir, Kumbha, Sangram, Krishnadeva Ray and Rama Raya. As a result of propagation

of Islam in India religious faith became an active element of policy with Hindu monarchs and chieftains.

Religious revival and the Bhakti cult. Besides this, impact of Islam on Hinduism produced important consequences. Islam gives the message of universal brotherhood, introduces equality in society, rejects caste-system and untouchability, is opposed to idol-worship and teaches oneness of God. These Islamic ideas had thrown up a powerful challenge to the upholders of Hinduism and the guardians of Hindu society. In due course these ideas began to have a conscious or unconscious effect upon the philosophical Hindu mind and fostered the growth of liberal movements under some saints and preachers who came to be known in history as religious reformers. With some differences in details these reformers were exponents of the liberal *Bhakti cult* or single-minded direct devotion and love to the One. They denounced idol-worship and caste-system, preached the fundamental equality and basic oneness of all religions and the unity of God-head, advocated the monotheistic faith, protested against the domination of the priestly class, opposed the complicated elaborate excessive ritualism and formalities of religion and emphasized simple devotion, faith and puritan life as the means of deliverance or salvation for all persons. They held that true religion consisted neither in the sophistries and dogmas of philosophers and doctrines of divines, nor in the practice of meaningless rituals, but in *Bhakti* or a passionate feeling of love for God. However, it should be noted that oneness of God which was the cardinal tenets of Islam and which infused a new spirit into the Hindu religious thought was not unknown to the Hindus. The monotheistic idea of God which has been the cardinal doctrine of Islam was well-known to the Hindus long before it was preached by the Prophet in Arabia.[1] It is explained distinctly in the Upanisads and the Vedantist philosophers of the ninth century had also expounded it. Even before the Muslim conquest of India, the Hindu reformers had proclaimed one and only one supreme God behind the countless deities of popular worship. But the contact with the mono-

Al-Beruni's India by Sachau, pp. 19, 20, 27, 31.

theistic faith of Islam gave a stimulus to such ideas and had great effect on teachers like Namadeva, Rama Nand, Kabir and Nanak in whom there is a happy blending of Hindu and Muslim influence.

Circumstances leading to the Bhakti cult. It is noted above that in their attempt to safeguard the Hindu society against the Muslims, orthodox people in the Hindu society increased the number of social taboos. Disdainful attitude towards girls, ill-treatment of the low castes, denial of entry and worship in the temples to the untouchables were a few of such social abuses enforced as the main content of Hinduism. The lower sections of the Hindu society were being crushed between the millstones of social injustice and religious tyranny of the higher caste Hindus and the politico-religious persecution of the Turko-Afghan fanatics. The propagation of the Bhakti cult provided a much coveted relief to the oppressed masses. They welcomed it most warmly.

Hinduism had degenerated a good deal. Masses were sunk in gross superstitions They believed in the supernatural powers, practised numerous complicated ceremonies and meaningless rituals and worshipped not only the stone and metallic images but trees and rivers also. The Brahmans enjoyed the monopoly of the sacred lore and numerous social privileges. Hinduism needed purification. The Bhakti Movement aimed at the purification of the religion and liberation of the masses from priestly thraldom.

Islam with its simple doctrines, democratic organisation and absence of rituals was gaining ground in the country. It was a challenge to the religious leaders of the Hindus. They therefore felt very strongly the necessity of making Hinduism a living, active force in the life of the common people. The Bhakti movement brought the required change. Medieval Bhakti cult was in some ways a reply to the attack of Islam. It was 'a new interpretation of Hinduism in terms of Islam's monotheism and coalitarianism.' K. M. Panikkar remarks that the medieval period witnessed many revivalist movements in Hinduism. They were based on Bhakti which was the outcome of the feeling of escapism which dominated the

Hindu mind as a result of the conquest of its sacred places by Islam.[1]

Thus, Islam's conquest of Northern India resulted in strengthening of the Hindu religion. The reaction of the Hindus to the challenge of monotheistic Islam was the rise of the great devotional sects of Medieval Hinduism. These sects were based on Bhakti.

It is pointed out elsewhere in the book that Bhakti cult originated in ancient India and even the Gita preached the *Bhakti yoga*. The sudden popularity of Bhakti in the medieval period is already explained in the above paragraphs. However, it should be carefully noted that all the saints of the Bhakti cult were theistic. In the Bhakti cult it is the one Supreme God that is the object of the devotee's adoration and it is to His grace that he looks for salvation. In fact all Bhakti cults are essentialy monotheistic in the sense that the devotees may worship Shiva, Krishna, or Devi, but they all symbolise the One and Eternal.

Influence of Islam on the Hindu religious ideas in the South. The religious revival in the period under review was first initiated in the south. From the eighth to the fifteenth century the south was the home of religious reforms. It was there that the Vaishnava and Saivite saints started the schools of Bhakti. Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, Nimbaditya, Basava and Madhva advocated the Bhakti cult and expounded their philosophical systems. The philosophical doctrines of Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and others were derived from the ancient system and their exposition was original. But according to Dr. Tarachand Ramanuja and others were influenced by Islam as it was then prevalent in the South. They did not grow up utterly regardless of the new currents of Islamic thought which then flowed in the country. "The elements in their totality and in their peculiar emphasis betray a singular approximation to Muslim faith."[2] But Islam influenced considerably Virsaiva and Lingayat sects. There were plenty of Muslims settled on the sea-coast of the

[1] *A Survey of India* by K. M. Panikkar, p. 163.
[2] *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* by Dr. Tarachand, p. 107.

South where the great Tamil teachers arose. They were honoured in society and the State patronised them. In course of time they together with their missionaries and saints propagated religous idéas and encouraged people to think independently on caste-system, religious ceremonies and rituals, monotheism, spiritual life, etc. The early commencement of the religious reform movements in the South indicate that they must have received inspiration from Islam. Dr. Tarachand in his book '*Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*' supports this view and states that the progress of religious thought in the south reveals a *growing absorption of Muslim* ideas into Hindu systems. But the influence of Islam was in the first stage indirect and selective. This influence on Lingayatism is seen even today. Inspite of being Hindus the Lingayats do not observe caste-system. Widow-marriage and divorce are practised by them. They have neither sacrifices nor *sradha*, neither fasts nor feasts. The theory of transmigration of soul is not believed in, their dead is not cremated but buried and no death ritual is prescribed. All Lingayats eat together, without any distinction, intermarry and live in unity as a community of brave warriors led by their sanctified preceptor.

Reformer-saints

The earliest reformer-saint was Shankaracharya who had a unique success. An account of his life and philosophy is already given in the preceding chapter. Next to him was Ramanuja whose doctrine was the basis of the Bhakti cult.

Ramanuja[1] (1060-1118). He was born in 1060 at Tirupati or Perumuer in the vicinity of Madras. He was educated at Canjeevaram and Shrirangam. On account of his scholarship he was appointed the successor of his teacher Yamunamuni, the well-known Vaishnava saint. He composed the *Vedanta Sangraha*, the *Bhasyas* of Badrayana's *Vedanta Satras* and the *Bhagavadgita*. He travelled all over India with his disciples and ultimately settled down at Shrirangam where he died in 1118.

For the Life and teachings of Ramanuja refer to *Life and Teachings of Ramanuja* by Rangacharya ; *The Teachings of Vedanta according to Ramanuja* by Sukhtankar ; *Vaishnavism and Saivism* by Bhandarkar.

He was a Vaishnava saint. The field of his activities was very extensive. He unified the followers of Vaishnavism and established Vaishnavism on a sound foundation. He preached the unity of God under Vishnu's name in the South. The aim of his teaching was the refutation of Shankara's absolute monism *Mayavad* and the establishment of Bhakti within the philosophy of Vedant. According to him *Brahman* is the one supreme reality and the individual souls are the modes or attributes of Brahman. The soul attains God by Bhakti. He was opposed to *Nirguna Iswara* and proclaimed that the love of God was the only way to salvation and believed in *Saguna Iswara* who is endowed with many auspicious qualities and virtues which a devotee might meditate upon with ecstasy and joy. His teachings are famous under the name of *Visistadvait.* He was not only a saint but reformer also. He was opposed to the caste distinctions and opened the way for the *Sudras* and the outcastes by allowing them to enter temples on certain days. He attached *Sudras* to his sect.

Nimbarka. He was a younger contemporary of Ramanuja. He carried the doctrine of Bhakti or devotion further. Though he belonged to the South he passed most of his life in Braja near Mathura in the North. He advocated the principle of self-surrender and the worship of Krishna and Radha. In his doctrine Krishna comes into prominence as the Supreme Lord of the Universe. According to him the way to eternal beatitude is *Bhakti* for the lotus-like feet of Krishna.

Madhva (1199-1278). Another teacher was Madhva at Kalyanpur in the Udipi district of South Kanara. He was a devotee of Vishnu. He did not attach much importance to Shiva. 'He rejected the qualified monism of Ramanuja and established a system of frank dualism, based mainly upon the *Bhagavata Puran.*' According to him knowledge leads to Bhakti and the final aim of man is the direct perception of Hari or Vishnu which leads to *Moksha* or eternal bliss.

Many other Vaishnava teachers spread the Bhakti among the people in the South and expounded the doctrines of Ramanuja, Nimbarka and Madhva.

Rama Nanda. The next famous teacher was Rama Nanda

who flourished in the last quarter of the foruteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries. He is responsible to a great extent for the spread of the Vaishnava religion in northern India. He was born at Prayag (Allahabad) in a Brahmin family and was educated partly at Prayag and partly at Banaras. He visited all the holy places in northern India and preached Vaishnavism. He advocated the worship of Ram and Sita in place of Vishnu. He rejected caste-system, opposed restrictions with regard to partaking of meals and admitted to his discipleship men of all classes without any distinction. He taught the doctrines of Bhakti cult to all castes without prejudice. Among his twelve disciples there was a barber, a cobbler and a Muslim weaver. He preached man's equality before God. He was the first reformer-saint to employ Hindi, the vernacular language, for the propagation of his doctrine and he gained a good deal of popularity among the masses, specially the lower classes. He was the bridge between the Bhakti movement of the South and the North. His most valuable contributions to the solution of the religious problems of the medieval period were the simplification of worship and the emancipation of the people from the traditional caste rules. Some scholars argue that Rama Nanda's contact with Islam at Banaras enabled him to introduce some novelties in the religion.

Vallabhacharya. Another renowned Vaishnava saint was Vallabhacharya, the most distinguished exponent of the Krishna cult. He was a Telugu Brahman of the Southern India. By virtue of his talents, scholarship and deep knowledge of philosophy he became famous and defeated *Pandits* in a public discussion. He advocated penance, self-mortification and renunciation of the world and 'insisted on the complete identity of both soul and world with the Supreme Spirit.' He advocated Bhakti to Krishna so enthusiastically that he asked his disciples to dedicate themselves to Krishna without any mental reservation and offer every thing to Him. This doctrine of Vallabhacharya was entirely saturated with spiritual ideas. His monism later on came to be known as *Sudha-advaita* or 'Pure Non-Duality'. But after his death abuses crept in Vallabhacharyaism and it 'became in its degenerate form the Epicureanism of the East.'

Chaitanya[1] (1458-1513). A contemporary of Vallabhacharya was the celebrated and popular Vaishnava saint and reformer Chaitanya of Bengal. He was born of Brahman parents at Nadia. He was married at the age of eighteen, followed the profession of a teacher but renounced the world at the age of twenty-five and wandered over the whole country. Krishnadas sums up the teaching of Chaitanya in two sentences—"if a creature adores Krishna and serves his *Guru* he is released from the meshes of illusion and attains to Krishna's feet," and "leaving these (*i.e.*, temptations) and the religious systems based on caste, (the true Vaishnava) helplessly takes refuge with Krishna." He denounced caste, proclaimed the universal brotherhood of men and the inefficiency of mere *Karma* or ceremonial rites. He preached faith in *Hari*. He held that through love and devotion, song and dance a state of ecstasy could be produced in which the personal presence of God would be realised by the devotee. Love is the watch-word of Chaitanya cult which exercised profound and wide influence on the masses. He favoured the life of a *Sanyasi* and accepted disciples from all classes, irrespective of caste or creed. Chaitanyaism is even today followed by thousands of people in Bengal and Bihar.

Kabir. He was another famous saint of northern India who made the most earnest effort to foster a spirit of harmony and toleration between Hindus and Muslims. Though scholars have differed in their opinion about the date of his birth, it is certain that either he lived in closing years of the fourteenth century or the beginning of the fifteenth century. He was a disciple of Ramanand and passed his days mostly in Banaras. He followed the profession of a weaver. He suffered a good deal of persecution at the hands of the orthodox Muslims. He did not believe in extreme asceticism and abstraction from the world. He denounced idolatry rites and ceremonies and laid great emphasis on the equality of man and declared that before God's high throne all are equal, high and low, Muslims and Hindus.

[1] Refer to *Chaitanya* by J. Sarkar ; and *Chaitanya Charitamrita* by Krishnadas Kaviraj.

He preached a religion of love which aimed at promoting unity amongst all castes and creeds. He was the first saint to reconcile Hinduism and Islam. He denounced the external formalism of both, abandoned the divisions between the two faiths and emphasised their real internal unity and common spiritual elements. He was the first to come forward boldly to proclaim a religion of the middle path. According to him salvation was to be achieved by *Bhajan* or devotional songs and worship, and for this purpose the soul should be free from all sham, cruelty, hypocrisy, dishonesty, insincerity and external formalities. Kabir's teachings, saturated with mysticism, betray the influence of sufi saints and poets.

Nanak. Another famous saint-preacher of the time was Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion. He was born in the village of Talwandi nearly thirty-five miles away from Lahore in 1469. He followed the profession of agriculture, cattle-tending and shop-keeping but without any success. Later on he was appointed as the keeper of Daulat Khan Lodi's store-house of charities. Though he was married and had children, he renounced the world, wandered over many lands, visited all the holy places and gathered spiritual experience. Wherever he went he preached his doctrines of universal toleration and unity of God-head. He condemned vehemently and bitterly idolatry and formalism of both Hinduism and Islam. His mission was to bring to an end the conflict of religions. He urged that barriers of caste and race must give way before the name of God who transcends them all. He exhorted people to give up hypocrisy, selfishness, worldliness and falsehood and lead a pure life of truth, honesty and kindness. His conception of religion was severely practical and sternly ethical. He did not believe in the renunciation, but advocated an asceticism of the heart, combined with the fulfilment of the worldly functions of body and mind. He was the reviver of the pure monotheistic doctrine of the Upanishads. Till his death he endeavoured at the unification of Hinduism and Islam and his disciples counted both Hindus and Muslims. His followers came to be known as Sikhs who were hammered into a

military nation by the successors of Nanak[1] who were known as the *Gurus* of Sikhs.

Dadu (1544-1603). The name of Dadu Dayal after those of Chaitanya and Nanak deserves mention among the saints of the Bhakti cult. He was born at Ahmedabad, but he passed most of his life in Naraina and Bharaina in Rajasthan. He was a tanner or *Mochi* by caste and his family used to make leather bags or *mots* for drawing water from well. He renounced the world, visited many places of pilgrimage and became a devotee and saint. He rose above prejudices of creed and emphasized the true inwardness of religion. He was a staunch supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. He raised his voice against idol-worship, caste distinctions, the theory or *avatars* of reincarnation of God, the conception of pilgrimage, the external formalities of religion and the practice of worship at the shrines of the departed saints. He insisted upon the unity of God and aimed at promoting unity among different creeds with the sentiments of brotherhood, love, affection and toleration. Therefore, Dadu established a sect whose followers are known as the *Dadu panthis*. He had no faith in infallibility of the scriptures but in the realisation of God by individual efforts and hence he preached complete surrender to God. He was a great poet and composed his verses in the vernacular of the country where he lived. *Maluk Das* (1574-1682) and *Sunder Das* (1596-1689) were other famous saints, who spread the religion of Bhakti. They like other saints condemned formalities and rituals of religion, idol-worship, works of charities, priesthood, etc.

Raidas. He lived at Banaras and was a worker in leather. He lived in a dilapidated hut and earned his living by mending shoes. He lived a life of simplicity and contentment and devoted himself to religious men and saints. Instead of indulging in high philosophic speculation about God and nature in his hymns he aimed at the unity of Hinduism and Islam. His hymns breathe spirit of humanity. He rejected the theory of

For details about Nanak refer to *The Sikh Religion* by Macauliffe ; *The History and Philosophy of Sikkhism* by Khazan Singh ; and *Nanak Prakash* by Gurumukh Singh.

incarnations, looked upon the world as the play of God and advocated complete surrender to Him. His cardinal doctrine was that "Hari (God) is in all and all is in *Hari.*"

Mirabai. Mirabai holds a very high position among the Vaishnava saints. Though she was a princess of the royal dynasty of Jodhpur and the queen of the renowned Sisodia dynasty of Chittor, she renounced the world for the sake of her Bhakti to Lord Krishna. She was considerably influenced by the reformer saints and their Bhakti cult. She followed their religion and was a great devotee of Krishna.

Reformer-Saints of Maharashtra.[1] The intercourse of Hindus and Muslims produced the same cultural phenomena in Maharashtra as it had been in northern India. The synthesis of the two religions was also achieved in Maharashtra. Their preachers and saints both Brahmans and non-Brahmans condemned the caste-restrictions and formal ritualism, denounced idol-worship, advocated Bhakti-cult and monotheistic creed and aimed to unite people in common love and faith in God. The history of religious upheaval and reformation begins from Jnaneswar who flourished in Maharashtra in the thirteenth century. He set forth noble and divine ideal of the spiritual life for the people to follow. His Marathi commentary of the Gita is very famous. After Jnaneswar Visoba Khechar, a contemporary of Rama Nand, had bitterly opposed idol-worship. Khechar's disciple Namdev exposed the inefficacy of the external acts of religion. He called upon people to break caste barriers and abandon religious intolerance and narrow mindedness. His cardinal doctrine was that salvation could be achieved by Bhakti or love and deep devotion to God. His Bhakti to *Vithoba* (Lord Vishnu) enabled him to perform several miracles in the country. Eknath was another saint of Maharashtra. He did not favour renunciation and asceticism, but preached that householder could attain salvation by Bhakti. Dasopant was another famous saint contemporary of Eknath. But Tukaram is more famous than these saints. He is next to Namdev. He wields the widest influence in Maharashtra. He was a contemporary of Shivaji and follow-

For religious upheaval and saints in Maharashtra refer to *Rise of the Maratha Power* by Ranade.

ed the profession of a trader. Being disgusted with the worldly life he abandoned his business and devoted himself entirely to contemplation and devotion. Though he was subjected to severe persecution by the Brahmans he became famous for his life of piety and selfless devotion. Tukaram's *abhangas* which embody his teachings are recited in every family even today in Maharashtra. He founded a *Varkari* sect. The deity to which all these saints of Maharashtra were devoted was named *Pandurang*, *Vithoba* or *Vitthal* and the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra centred round the shrine of Vithoba or Vishnu at Pandharpur on the banks of the Bhima.

These religious reformers and saints "supplied the spiritual background to the political aim of workers like Shivaji and they made an ardent and piteous appeal to God Almighty through their favourite deity to intervene on behalf of the oppressed peoples and bring them relief from Muslim persecution." As a result of their preaching and writings the pulsation of an entirely new national life began to stir throughout Maharashtra.

Sufism and Sufi Saints.[1] If Islam had affected Hinduism, the influence of Hinduism on Islam was profound. It gave rise to Sufi movement in the domain of Islam. Islam has a kind of mysticism called Sufism. Its original source is the Quran and the life of Muhammad. Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Manism and Neo-Platonism swelled it by a large contribution. Muhammad, the prophet, was a mystic and the mystical note sounds clearly in the utterances of the Quran. When the Indian and Greek cultures came into close contact the Greek philosopher Plato assimilated some elements of the Hindu philosophy and formed his own philosophy which is known as Neo-Platonism. When the Greek works were translated into Arabic the Neo-Platonic ideas passed into Islam in the beginning of the ninth century, such as contempt for the world, leaning towards divine life, etc. Contact with the Christians accentuated certain tendencies among the followers of Islam, such as complete detachment from affairs of personal interest, indifference towards

1 *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture* by Dr. Tarachand, Chapter III, Mysticism in India.

suffering, admiration or blame, meditation and repetition of the name of God etc. The close and intimate commercial intercourse between the Indians and the Arabs and the familiarization of the later with the Indian literature and sciences, and their translation in Arabic led to the assimilation of Indian philosophical ideas, certain Buddhist doctrines and Hindu *Vedant*. After the death of Muhammad the followers of Islam had included such saints who encouraged the growth of certain fraternity of saints by their devotion, renunciation and spiritual life. This has profoundly influenced Islam and encouraged the growth of mysticism in Islam. All these influences led to the new religious tendencies in the realm of Islam which came to be known as Sufism. Till the ninth century Sufism was merely tendencious and possessed no system, but later on it developed metaphysical system and the organisation of monastic orders. From the twelfth century onwards Sufism began to dominate the Muslim mind, literature, philosophy, etc. The name of Sufi was first applied to Abu Hashim of Kufa who died in 778 A. D. The religious doctrines and spiritual ideas of Husain bin Mansur al-Hallaj of the tenth century have special significance in Sufism. He emphasized the realisation of God. He conceived the relation of God with man as the infusion of the divine into the human soul. Shaikh Shahab-uddin Shurawardi and Ibn-al Arabi of the thirteenth century have promoted a good deal the growth of Sufism by their doctrines. The first laid emphasis upon the eternal divine light and unison of soul with God, the latter explained that the divine knowledge of God can be achieved by faith, devotion and meditation. He advocated religious toleration for all faiths as God is realised by all of them. One of the greatest authorities on Sufi philosophy is Ibn-al-Arabi. Nearly one hundred and fifty years after him Abdul Karim Al Jili had expounded the cardinal doctrines of Sufism. According to him man attains spiritual perfection passing through four stages—complete surrender to the will of God, destruction of the individual, acquisition of miraculous power and divine attributes and lastly entrance into Essence becoming perfect (Insan-i-Kamil) Godman. He preached that all faiths were thoughts about one reality, God, and all ways of worship express same

aspects of that reality and in the end all together contribute to perfection of the whole. This reveals that the doctrines of Jili were profoundly impressed by the Hindu *Vedant*, the monistic philosophy. Arabic and Persian poets and writers of the subsequent times had propounded Sufi-philosophy in their works. The practical aim of every Sufi is absorption in God for which there are three stages. The first stage consists of good actions, surrender of will to the commands of God, repentance for sins, acquisition of faith, maintenance of cleanliness, performance of prayers, pilgrimage, and fast giving alms or charity, and suppression by ascetic practices, silence and solitude of such evil propensities of self as pride, envy, anger, narrow-mindedness etc. The second stage is that of attainment of divine and spiritual knowledge and acquisition of detached view of life. Inward light and eternal love transform intellect and will. The third stage is the highest stage. There is complete union with the Divinity and the attainment of the unitive state. The mystic becomes one with God. Every Sufi who seeks absorption with God always needs a spiritual guide or the preceptor (*Pir* or *Shaikh*) who regulates his disciple's conduct and keeps watch over his spiritual progress and enables him to pass through all the stages leading to the essential unity with God. A Sufi realizes God by constant meditation, contemplation, music, dance and annihilation of self etc. Dr. Tarachand remarks that "Sufism indeed was a religion of intense devotion, love was its passion, poetry, song and dance its worship and passing away in God its ideal." The Sufist movement afforded a common platform to the more learned and devout minds among the Hindus and the Muslims. Sufists made no distinction between different creeds and faiths. They preached their doctrines to the fellowers of all faiths. In fact Sufism was essentially a faith or rather an intellectual enjoyment reserved for the philosophers, authors and mystics free from bigotry.

The above-mentioned account of Sufism makes it clear that its doctrines were profoundly influenced by Hinduism. It was on account of the Sufi movement that in the medieval age saints, scholars, Hindus and Muslims, could intermingle freely without any distinction at one and the same place. Khwaja

Muinuddin Chisti, Nizamuddin Aulia, Shaikh Salim Chisti, Malik Muhammad Jayasi, Kutuban, Shah Badi-ud-Din Qutb-ul-Madar etc. were reverenced both by the Hindus and the Muslims.

To sum up, the influence of Islam is clearly manifested in the teachings of religious reformers and saints like Kabir, Nanak, Dadu Dayal and Nam Deva. They received great impetus from the presence of the followers of Islam in their immediate neighbourhood. The example of Islamic society acted as solvent on Hindu prejudice. Contact with Islam accentuated monotheism of Hinduism, tended to remove the barriers of caste, strengthened the movement of Bhakti cult, introduced new elements in its principles about *guru* or preceptor, minimised the rigidity of the cult without completely abolishing it and promoted the growth of the popular languages. It also led to the partial reconciliation with Islam and subordination of rites and ceremonies, pilgrimages and fasts, meditation and contemplation to the worship of love and faith.

Cultural importance of the reformer-saints and their legacies. The above mentioned reformer-saints not only emancipated the masses from the social and religious tyranny but contributed substantially to the cultural evolution of the country. All the reformers condemned caste system, denounced polytheism and idolatry, pleaded for faith and sincerity and advocated puritan life. They preached that true religion does not mean elaborate ritualism but devotion to and love for God. The cardinal doctrine which they emphasised was that God is the God of Hindus as well as Muslims, of Brahmans as well as Chandalas and that before Him all are equal. They asked their followers to devote themselves to their deity whole-heartedly and emphasised that it was a way for salvation. They pointed that in the Bhakti it is the Almighty God that is the main object of a devotee's adoration and it is to His grace that he looks for his deliverance. According to them, though the devotees worship various gods or goddesses, all Bhakti cults are monotheistic in the sense that all deities symbolise the One and Eternal. In fact, they preached the simple religion of love and complete surrender to an immanent God who rescued His true and sincere devotees

from their miserable plight. It was due to these saints that the Bhakti cult gained the greatest popularity in the medieval period and the Bhakti movement progressed with wonderful rapidity inspite of the intolerant fanatic Muslim rulers of the age.

The second legacy of these saints was their religious revival the aim of which was to synthesise Hinduism and Islam to ensure the communal goodwill and unity, to create an environment of toleration and co-operation. It was in this atmosphere that the foundation of the Mughal rule was laid in the country. They tried successfully to bridge the gulf between Hinduism and Islam and thus paved the way for liberalism of Akbar. These saints attracted thousands of devotees from the Hindus and the Muslims and exercised an extremely healthy and stabilising influence on society at a time when the anti-social conspiracy of self-seeking Mullas and the fanatic Muslim rulers on the one hand and the debased priestly class and the higher caste Hindus on the other hand were driving the helpless masses into utter despondency and desperation. The saints of the period under review inspired the Bhakti movement that prepared the ground for liberal tendencies which found their fruition in the reign of Akbar. "It was only then that the Hindus and Muslims stood shoulder to shoulder in the service of a common empire, and shed their religious prejudices to an extent never reached before since the Islamic conquest of our country. It was the voice of Kabir and Nanak which spoke through the imperial lips and created storm in the orthodox cricles."[1]

The third legacy of these saints was the social and religious reforms. They exposed the futility of all external ceremonies and worship, emancipated mind of the people from the domination of the priests and Mullas, minimised the religious favouritism, fanaticism and intolerance, arrested the growth of rational life and self-knowledge. They aimed at the abolition of the caste-barriers, endeavoured to democratise religion and society, devoted their lives to the uplift of the fallen and oppressed, elevated the status of the women, laid emphasis on *karma* or action rather than birth or rank, and spread such noble sentiments as humaneness, toleration, generosity in the Hindu society

History of Muslim Rule in India by Dr. Iswariprasad, p. 203.

which tended henceforth to become more liberal. In short, they brought about the simplification of worship and liberalisation of caste rules. They tried, not without a considerable measure of success, to uplift the nation, in the words of Ranade, "to higher level of capacity both of thought and action."

Their fourth legacy was that they safeguarded the Hindu culture, life and literature and kept the torch of Hinduism burning even in the days of unprecedented political unheavals, oppression, injustice and inhumanity. They enabled the Hindus to withstand the onslaught of propaganda and proselytism of Islam.

Their fifth legacy was that they promoted the growth of vernacular literatures of different provinces. They stimulated evolution and enrichment of the literature of the spoken languages. They utilised vernaculars as the vehicle of their teachings to make their religious revival nation-wide and popular. They rendered the famous scriptures and their cardinal principles into the vernaculars spoken by the masses. Consequently the vernaculars not only received a distinct impetus and a new dignity but rose in prominence also. The Vaishnavas created a vast lyrical literature in Hindi and Bengali ; the verses composed by the saints of Maharashtra enriched the Marathi literature and the teachings of the Sikh Gurus invented new alphabets and created Gurumukhi literature. We shall now take this opportunity to describe the growth of the vernacular literatures in the medieval age.

Literature

Though the Turko-Afghan kings were primarily military persons, some of them took interest in *belles-letters* and under their liberal patronage literature of high order was produced during the period under review. The court of Delhi Sultans was well attended by writers, poets, scholars, philosophers, logicians, theologians, lawyers and chroniclers. Amir Khusrau, Mir Hasan Dehlwi, Badruddin called Badri-i-Chach, Ahmad Thanesari, Qazi Abdul Muqtadir Shanihi and Amil-ul-Mulk Multani were the shining lights of the literary firmament during the period of the Delhi Sultans. The court of Muhammad Tughlak was adorned by poets, logicians, philosophers and

physicians. Similarly celebrated writers, scholars and poets lived in the courts of the provincial dynasties under whose patronage a great deal of literature was produced in the age. Jaunpur was a well-known seat of Arabic learning, Islamic philosophy and literature. Its famous ruler Ibrahim Sharki patronised generously scholars. His liberal bounty attracted many men of letters to his court. Numerous works on literature and philosophy were compiled during his reign. Not only new and original works were written but famous Sanskrit works were also translated in Persian. In the fourteenth century Firoz Tughlak got many works on philosophy and astronomy translated in Persian. During the reign of Sikandar Lodhi a medical treatise was translated from Sanskrit into Persian. But it should be noted that the Delhi Sultans patronised Islamic literature. Their patronage was confined to a culture of limited type. The poets and writers of the age looked to Persia and Arabia for their inspiration. Indian life did not figure in their works. The scope of the literary and cultural activity was very much limited. It was confined to the courts of the Delhi Sultans and provincial rulers.

The growth of vernacular literature.[1] But Islam gave an immediate filling to the vernacular languages which were in the course of evolution. The great reform movement gave a great impetus to the development of vernacular literatures. The religious reformers and saints wrote, spoke and preached in a language which could be easily understood by the masses. The growth of Hindi, Marathi, Gujrati, Bengali, Maithili, Punjabi, Gurumukhi and other provincial literatures took place in this age. Thus Ramanand and Kabir, Surdas and Tulsidas preached in Hindi, Mirabai and some other preachers and saints of the Radha-Krishna cult sang in Brajbhasha. They not only enriched the Hindi poetry but helped a good deal towards the composition of a vast mass of sacred Hindi literature. Nama-deva, Jnaneswara, Tukaram and others greatly helped the development of Marathi literature. Nanak and his devoted followers

[1] *Outline of Religious Literature* by Farquhar, and *Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* by George Grierson.

promoted the growth of Punjabi and Gurumukhi. Narsing Mehta and other reformers brought Gujrati into prominence and Bengali literature owes a heavy debt to the teachers of the Vaishnava cult like Chaitanya, Chandidas, etc. Let us now review in detail this growth of the vernacular literature.

Hindi Literature. The liberal patronage extended by the court of provincial rulers to men of letters has added to the growth of the Hindi literature. The poet Chand-Bardai of the court of Prithviraj Chauhan of Delhi and the author of the great epic the *Prithviraj-Raso* was the earliest Hindi poet. This book describes the life of the warrior king Prithviraj and narrates his battles with the Muslims. A distinguished contemporary of Chand Bardai was Jagnayak, the author of the *Alha-Khand.* It is a lyric describing in stirring and inspiring language the deeds of love and war of two brave warriors Alha and Udal of Mahoba. Vidhyadhar in his book has described the exploits of Jaychand, the king of Kannauj. In Rajasthan a vast literature, rich in heroic ballads and poetry connected with the deeds of Rajput chiefs and warriors, grew. *Hamir-Raso* and *Hamir-Kavya* of the poet Sharangdhar deserve mention in this connection. They give a glowing account of the gallant deeds of Ranthambhor's ruler Hamir. Similarly Nalh Singh has composed *Vijayapal-Raso* which describes the battles of Karauli chief Vijay Pal in stirring language; Narpati Nath had written *Bisaldeva-Raso* and a *Bhat* or bard had composed *Khuman-Raso* which relates the wars and battles from Shri Ram to Khuman. The period of these *Rasos* is called the age of the rich heroic ballads. This is followed by the period of reformer-saints and their religious and philosophical literature.

Gorakhnath and Namadeva were the first saints to compose their *Bhajans* and *Pads* or verses in Hindi. But the verses of Kabir, Mira and Nanak are most famous. Kabir's verses numbering about 20,000, 'are striking examples of epigrammatic and aphoristic style.' His poetry which possessed force and charm is dominated with the sentiment of Hindu-Muslim unity. His mysticism has its own prominence in Hindi literature. He popularised Hindi religious literature and vastly extended its influence. Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, has

enriched Hindi literature with his verses which have their own poetical excellence. Kabir, Nanak, Dadu Dayal, Sunder Das, Maluk Das, Sundar Vilas, Dharamadas etc. have created religious literature. Mirabai who was intensely devoted to her deity Lord Krishna expressed her love and devotion in exquisite verses which are famous for their sweet melody and tenderness. *Narsingji ka Mayra*, *Raj Govinda* and a commentary on *Gitagovind* are her famous works. Sufi saints have also enriched the Hindi literature. Among these Mulla Daud composed *Chandawat*, Kutban wrote *Mrigawat*, Manzan *Madhu Malti* and Malik Muhammad Jayasi the famous *Padmavat* which deals with the love story of Ratansen of Chittor and Padmavati, a princess of Ceylon, and his battle with Alauddin Khilji. Jayasi has expounded the cardinal principles of Sufism in his works. The narration of the growth of Hindi literature would be incomplete if Amir Khusrau is not mentioned. He was a poet of the court of Khilji and Tughlak rulers. He enjoyed their royal patronage. He was a poet and writer of high order. His many works testify to the boundless fertility of his muse. His poetry is simple and appeals directly to the masses. He was a man of versatile genius and therefore wrote works on several subjects with marvellous ease and grace.

Marathi literature. Real Marathi literature begins from the medieval age. Chakradhar, Bhaskar, Bhatt, Narendra and Mukandaraya were the early poets and writers of Marathi. Namadeva composed his hymns in Marathi. But Jnaneswar, the famous saint of Maharashtra in the thirteenth century, composed his commentary on the Gita called *Jnaneswari* in Prakrit Marathi. It appealed to the masses most. Another saint and writer Eknath flourished nearly two hundred and fifty years after Jnaneswar. His translation of the *Bhagwat* in Marathi and *Rukmini Swaymbar* and *Bhawarth Ramayan* deserve mention. His contemporary was Dasopant, the author of *Gitarnava* and *Padarnava*. But the *Abhangas* of Tukaram are most famous in Marathi literature of the period They are recited in every house even today in Maharashtra.

Gujrati literature. The early medieval Gujrati literature was enriched by the bards and the Jain monks. To preach the

doctrines of Jainism the Jain monks had composed many works in poetry called *Ras*, among which *Bharatbahubali Ras* of Gunaratna Suri, *Shilras* of Vijaya Bhadra, *Gautam Swami Ras* of Udaywant, *Madan rekha* of Harsewak and *Shant Ras* of Sunder Suri deserve mention. The Bhakti movement in Gujrat stimulated the growth of religious literature in Gujrati. Mira and Narsing Mehta occupy prominent position among the saints and poets of Gujrat. Narsing Mehta who was famous for his devotion and love to Lord Krishna had composed more than one lac of verses and sweet religious songs in Gujrati. His popular works are *Chaturi Shodashi*, *Samaldas no Vivah*, *Dhan lila* and *Govind gaman*. Mehta expounded his mysticism in his works indirectly. He was followed by two famous poets Bhalan and Bhim. They translated Sanskrit works in Gujrati and composed original ones. Vatso, the author of *Subhadra Haran* and *Sadhu Charitra*, Vachharaja, the author of *Ras Manjari*, Kushal Labh Vachak, the writer of *Madhavanal Kamkandala Ras* and Tulsi who wrote on Dhruva are the famous Gujrati poets of the sixteenth century. Gujrati prose was gradually evolving and *Panchatantra*, *Ramayan*, *Yogvashishta* and *Gita* were translated in prose in the sixteenth century.

Bengali literature. The works of Vidyapati and Chandidas, renowned poets of the age, provided stimulus to the growth of the Bengali literature. Vidyapati's verses which express his devotion and love to Radha-Krishna moved the hearts of millions by their sweet melody and earnestness of his Bhakti. Vidyapati wrote works not only in Bengali and Maithili but Sanskrit also. He flourished in the court of Shiva Singh of Tirhut. Writers and poets who followed Vidyapati produced a crop of Bengali literature. The Muslim rulers of Bengal also patronised Bengali. They engaged scholars to translate the *Ramayan* and the *Mahabharat* from Sanskrit into Bengali. Thus Sultan Nusrat Shah of Gaur got the *Mahabharat* translated into Bengali. Krittivas whose work is the Bible for the common people preached the Bengali translation of the Sanskrit *Ramayan*. He enjoyed the patronage of a "King of Gaur". Maladhar Vasu translated the *Gita* into Bengali under the patronage of the Sultan Hussain Shah, Kavindra Parameswar, as the command of Hussain Shah's

general Paragal Khan, undertook to translate the *Mahabharat* and brought it down to the *Stri Parva*. Then, Chaitanya enriched the Bengali literature with his songs and *bhajans*. The disciples and followers of Chaitanya made Bengali rich with their sweet songs and *bhajans*, verses and translation of Sanskrit works. In fact, a large volume of Chaitanya literature was produced. But in the sixteenth century Bengali was overshadowed with the literature about Shiva and Durga.

Vernacular Literature in the South. In the South a great impetus was given to literary efforts by the Saiva movement in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and new original literature was produced in Tamil by the saints of Saivism. Similarly the Telugu and Kanarese literatures received much encouragement from Vijaynagar kings. Great scholars, commentators, poets and thinkers were associated with their courts. Krishna Deva Raya, the most renowned emperor of Vijaynagar, took keen interest in literature and himself composed a poem called the *Amuktamalyada*. Allasani Peddana was his poet laureate. He was a writer of considerable original merit. He wrote many works, the most famous among which is the *Svarochisa Manu Charitra*. Its story is based on the Markandeya Puran. Another distinguished poet of the age was Nandi Timman, the author of *Parijat Apaharan*.

During the period under review the Jains also produced a great deal of religious and secular literature. They wrote many independent philosophical and poetical works. Asadhara and Hemchandra Suri are the most famous Jain writers of the period. The former was the author of many commentaries and works on Jain ethics but the latter surpassed him in his monumentary works. The rhyme which is regarded as a speciality of modern vernaculars is found profusely used in *Apabhramsa* works of the Jains. The Jain writers of the Digambar school by their works gave a great encouragement to the Kanarese and Tamil languages. Hemchandra Suri of Swetamber school who flourished in Gujrat wrote his works in Sanskrit. He was an ascetic, epic poet, lexicographer, teacher and scholar of outstanding merit. In his works he made successful attempts to combine the Aryan culture with Jain

thought. In his monumental work *Purusha Charita*, lives of the Great Men, he had not only narrated the great traditions of the past but discussed and popularised in a Jain garb the entire mythology of Hinduism. 'Hemchandra is one of the makers of Indian mind and takes place with Valmiki, Vyas and Shankara.'[1] Other Jain monks also wrote works on several subjects in *Apabhramsa* and Gujrati. It should be noted that owing to the crisis brought about by Islam, literature, like religion, tended to become less the monopoly of the learned scholars and Pandits and more a cause of common people.

Literary activity in Sanskrit.[2] Inspite of the abundant crop of the vernacular literatures Sanskrit literature did not cease to be cultivated and the period was not entirely barren of works in Sanskrit, both religious as well as secular. About 1300 A. D. Parthasarathi wrote many works on the *Karma Mimansa*. Some works which expounded the doctrines of *Yoga*, *Vaiseshika* and *Nyaya* systems of philosophy were also written in the period under review. The Buddhists at Vikramsila in Bengal and Jains in Gujrat and at other places assiduously studied logic. A Jain monk named Deva Suri who flourished in the twelfth century was the greatest Jain logician of the age. The saints of the Bhakti movement made valuable contributions to philosophical literature. Great works of the philosophic Hinduism were written in the south. Under the patronage of the Vijaynagar emperors Madhvacharya and Sayana, two brothers, in close association with other learned scholars, wrote famous authoritative commentaries on the Vedas and Hindu philosophy. Their famous work on Hindu philosophy is *Sarvadarshan*. Sayana wrote commentaries on the *Rigved*, *Etreya Brahman* and other scriptures. There were written many important Sanskrit dramas like *Hammirmadamardan* by Jai Singh, *Pradyumna abhyudaya* by prince Ravivarman, *Pratap Rudra Kalyan* by Vidyanath, *Parvati Parinaya* by Vamana Bhatta Bana, *Gangadas Pratap Vilas* by Gangadhar and *Vidagha Madhava* and *Lalita-Madhava* by Rupa

A Survey of Indian History by K. M. Panikkar, p. 165.

For details refer to Macdonnellon on *Sanskrit Literature*, Imperial Gazette II ; *Classical Sanskrit Literature* by Keith (Heritage of India Series).

Goswami who was distinguished for his extraordinary learning and power of assimilation. He wrote nearly twenty-five works in Sanskrit. This age is noted for a few excellent commentaries. Smriti and grammatical literature flourished in Mithila and Bengal during this period. Many commentaries were written on the ancient law books on the style of Vijnanesvara, the author of *Mitakshra* and Jimuta Vahana, the writer of *Daya-Bhaga*. From the thirteenth century to the fifteenth Mithila became so famous in this field that its writers of the Smriti literature came to be regarded as forming a separate school. Smritic studies were revived and developed by Chandesvara and other eminent scholars and Bhava Datta wrote his famous commentary on Naisadha. But Vachaspati Mishra, who was a renowned scholar of Sanskrit and Maithil vernacular, flourishing in the closing years of the fifteenth century, was the most famous among them. Literature of the philosophy of devotionalism (*bhakti*) and smriti was also promoted luxuriantly in Bengal. Raghunath Siromani and Raghunandan Mishra became most famous there. Similarly in the western India Nil Kanth Shastri wrote *Vyavahar-mayukha* in the sixteenth century. In Gujrat Sanskrit resurgence was associated with Hemchandra Suri and the magnificent and learned court of Viradhavala revived the traditions of Raja Bhoja in the west. Rana Kumbha's court in Mewar became the centre of Sanskrit learning and culture. Thus sudden efflorescence of Sanskrit literature in the distant places like Mewar, Kalinjar, Gujrat and Vijayanagar was due to the fact that with the Muslim conquest of the Gangetic Valley, scholars and poets took refuge in the courts of the Hindu rulers in distant areas.

Though the works of Sanskrit compared to those of the vernaculars were more unreal, ornate, technical and unrelated to the daily life and the social and spiritual aspirations of the people, yet it was Sanskrit that alone united the Hindus during this period. From the Cape Comorin to Kashmir, the language of the scholars and their thought continued to be Sanskrit and without the continued cultivation of Sanskrit language the Hindus would have lost all sense of unity, harmony and fellow-feelings. Again by tying the vernaculars of the country to the thought-forms and

traditions of Sanskrit a cultural link and spiritual unity was established among the provinces—an achievement of the period under review.

The Growth of Urdu. Another important achievement in the domain of literature was the growth of Urdu, "out of the mingling of Persian, Arabic and Turkish words and ideas with languages and concepts of Sanskrit origin." It has the words of Arabic, Persian, Turkish languages, western Hindi and dialects of Delhi province. The grammatical structure of Urdu is essentially that of Hindi. "The various necessities which forced the Mohammedans and Hindus to meet each other involved the evolution of a common language" which came to be known as Urdu. It was rather the outcome of the linguistic synthesis of the Hindus and the Muslims, an indigenous product. In course of time it developed new characteristics and the poets, writers and historians of the Muslim courts enriched its literature with their works. It became a good literary language in the north in the eighteenth century. Amir Khusrau was the first who used Urdu as vehicle for the expression of his poetic fancy.

Historic Literature. The period under survey witnessed the growth of historical literature under the patronage of the Turko-Afghan Sultans. It is rather a gift of the Muslims to India. The chronological sense was very imperfectly developed among the Hindus and consequently they neglected the historical literature before the Muslim conquest. But some valuable historical chronicles were composed in elegant Persian prose during this period. Minhaj-ud-Din's *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, a general history of the Islamic world, Amir Khusrau's *Mesnevis* and *Tarikhi-i-Alai*, Hasan Nizami's *Tajul-Maasir* Shams-i-Siraj Afif's *Tarikhi-i-Firoz-Shahi*, Sarhindi's *Tarikh-i-Mubarak-Shahi* and Yahia bin Ahmed's *Tarikh-i-Mubarak-Shahi* deserve special mention. They are standard historical works utilised by the modern historians for writing the history of the Delhi Sultanate. The most famous historian of the period was Zia-ud-Din Barani, a contemporary of Muhammad bin Tughlak and Firoz Shah. He enjoyed the patronage of both the Sultans. He composed *Tarikh-i-Firoz-Shahi* and Shams-i-Siraj continued it. These chronicles not only served as important historical mate-

rials of study in themselves but furnished an example which Hindu writers and Hindu rulers were not slow to imitate.

Indo-Persian Literature. The courts of the Turko-Afghan rulers were adorned with Persian scholars, writers, poets, theologians, philosophers and historians. Some of them produced real monumental works and left a deep impression upon the Persian literature in general. An account of the distinguished chroniclers and their works in Persian is already given above. The most notable among the poets, writers and theologians were Amir Khusrau and Amir Hassan Dehlvi. Traditions ascribe to Khusrau the composition of ninety-nine works. However, it is believed that some of his works are either lost or have not yet been traced. He enjoyed royal patronage from Muhammad Khan, Balban's eldest son, to Ghiyasuddin Tughlak when he died in 1325. He was a great poet, prose-writer, master musician, gifted bard and laxicographer. He was the first Muslim scholar who used Hindi words and adopted Indian poetic imagery and themes. His famous works are *Khazain-ul-Jutuch* and *Tarikh-i-Alai.* Mir Hassan Dehlvi, a contemporary of Khusrau, was another famous Indo-Persian poet. He is described as 'musical and most pleasing.' Maulana Muaiyyan-ud-Din Umrani and Ain-ul-Mulk Multani were other shining literary figures. Ain-ul-Mulk's famous work is the *Munshat-i-Mahru* which is a collection of letters and despatches. They served as models for official correspondence. Some Muslim scholars were attracted towards Sanskrit and they translated some Sanskrit works in Persian.

Some salient features of the literary activity. The literary activity of this period has certain salient features which are as follows :—

1. The abundant out-crop of the Hindu literature, both in the vernaculars and Sanskrit, indicates that the Hindu mind was never sterile as the result of Turko-Afghan conquest of the country. The virility and vigour of the Hindu mind was never extinguished by the deadening effect of the foreign conquest and proselytism of Islam. Though royal patronage was denied to the cultural activities of the Hindus their literature flourished in many centres and capitals.

2. The literary works that were produced in the age were not of very high order. They could not be compared to the masterpieces of Bhasa, Kalidas, Bana or Bhava Bhuti.

3. To promote the understanding of Hindu culture translation of Sanskrit works in Persian were encouraged by the Muslim rulers and scholars.

4. Several Muslim poets and writers began to use the spoken language to make the masses understand their philosophy, teachings and thought. Poet Masud used Hindi to express his ideas as early as the eleventh century.

5. Numerous saints utilised the vernaculars to appeal to the people and attract them towards their teachings. The Bhakti movement thus led to a rich crop of religious and philosophical literature.

6. Urdu was evolved as a common medium of expression between the Muslims and the Hindus. Its own literature had grown up.

7. A large number of histories, biographies and letters were written in Persian. They formed a magnificent source of history and introduced historical literature in India.

8. As the Kayasthas and Kashmiri Brahmans entered the lower ranks of bureaucracy during the period of Muslim administration they were gradually evolving a new language and prose style for official correspondence and later on it came to be known as Hindustani.

9. With the advent of the Muslims the use of paper, love for calligraphy and the system of illuminating manuscripts were introduced in the sphere of literature and they attained their perfection under the Mughals.

Education[1]

Though the attainments of the followers of Islam in education were not very high, yet the State encouraged scholars and learning was held in high esteem. Teaching class occupied a high position in society and commanded respect and confidence of the people. There existed affectionate relation between the

[1] *Education in Muslim India* by S. M. Jaffar, pp. 16-75; *Promotion of Learning* by N. N. Law.

teacher and his pupils. Personal service was expected from the pupils.

The Hindu monitorial system was adopted by the Muslims. More intelligent and advanced students were appointed as monitors and assisted the teacher in his work of teaching. Though education was supposed to be incumbent upon every Muslim, the education of average girl was neglected. Though there was no separate department of public instruction, the Muslim kings opened schools and colleges and established libraries and supplemented their educational achievements by patronage of literary works. Poets, writers, philosophers and chroniclers of eminence adorned the Muslim courts. *Maktabs* for primary education and *madarsahs* for higher education were set up both by the State and well-to-do persons. Many times *maktabs* were attached to mosques and shrines. Both *maktabs* and *madarsahs* were supported by state grants in cash or land or private liberality. As there was no printing press books were written by hand and certain persons were specially employed for the purpose. Consequently letter-writing and penmanship were highly valued in the Muslim India. Sometimes technical training was diffused by the system of apprenticeship in *Karkhanas* or work-shops under *Ustads* or master artisans. Under the patronage of the Sultan and some Muslim chiefs of the provinces Sanskrit was studied by the Muslim scholars and some important Sanskrit works were translated in Persian. Though education was mostly religious, the courses of study included grammar, rhetoric, logic, theology, ethics, metaphysics, literature, jurisprudence and elementary science. The medium of instruction was Persian and the study of Arabic was compulsory for the Muslims. There was neither standardization nor degrees and diplomas. Examinations were not the be-all and the end-all of all education. Corporal punishments were inflicted on the students. It is doubtful whether the Hindus and the Muslims studied side by side in the *maktabs* or *madarsahs* or *khanquahs* (schools attached to shrines of saints) without any restrictions of rank, race or religion. Balban, Alauddin and Mohammad Tughlak encouraged education. They showed favours to all intellectuals of eminence. Many were the recipients of honorarium from

the State. Firoz Tughlak strove zealously for the spread of education. He not only patronised learning and encouraged men of letters, but sent out eminent teachers to reside in different parts of his kingdom for imparting instruction to the people. He repaired old madarsahs, built new ones and founded nearly thirty colleges. Firoz-Shahi Madarsah was the most magnificent educational institution founded by Firoz Tughlak. A big college with a mosque and tank was set up by him in the vicinity of Qadam Sharif to immortalise the name of his beloved son Fateh Khan. Under Khizar Khan and Mubarak Shah, the Sayyid Kings, Badaon and Cuttair flourished as centres of education. They contained many mosques and madarsahs. Bahlol Lodhi and Sikandar Lodhi both took interest in education. Both opened schools and colleges in their kingdom. Sikandar Lodhi gave a fresh impulse to the arts of writing, compilation and translation and standard literary works were produced under him, the most famous among them is *Tibb-i-Sikandari*, a book on the science of medicine. According to Farishta, it was under Sikandar Lodhi that the Hindus commenced the study of Persian and Mohammedan literature.[1]

In the provincial kingdoms of the North and the Shia-States of the South the Sultans patronized learning and promoted education. Schools and seminars were set up at Multan under Hussain Shah Dangha and Hussain Mirza. Jaunpur developed as an important centre of education under Ibrahim-Sharki. Hundreds of men flocked at Jaunpur from far and near for higher education. There were a very large number of *madarsahs*. It was a university city. There was another famous college in Malwa at Mandu in close proximity to the Masjid of Sultan Hushang Shah. In Bengal Ghiyasuddin I and II, Hussain Shah and Nusrat Shah promoted education liberally. They founded many schools and colleges and attracted eminent scholars and teachers. Ghiyasuddin II founded the famous college called *Darasbari*. The Hussain kings of Bengal encouraged Islamic as well as Hindu learning. In Gujrat the city of Ahmedabad was adorned with magnificent *maktabs* and *madarsahs*. In the south the Bahmani Sultans were generous

Brigg's Translation of *Jarishta*, Vol. I, p. 587.

patrons of letters and opened schools and colleges in their dominions making ample arrangements for free education. In their benevolent solicitude for the welfare of the poor and orphans, the Sultans of Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golkunda established many *maktabs* and *madarsahs*—in Bijapur, Gulbarga, Bidar, Ellichpur, Daulatabad and Debal. Bijapur and Bidar became seats of learning. The Imperial Library of Bijapur was noted for its rare books.

Fine Arts

The rulers of the period under review were great patrons of fine arts. Consequently embroidery works, ornamental pottery, metal works, ivory work and calligraphy progressed well. But painting was shunned by the Muslim rulers and nobles as it was prohibited by Quranic traditions. But architecture was very liberally encouraged by them.

Architecture[1]

One of the richest contributions of early Muslims was in the domain of architecture. The spirit of synthesis that was expressed in religious thought was also clearly manifested in fine arts. Indo-Muslim architecture is a shining example of this spirit of synthesis and harmony. The Muslims had evolved their own art with certain characteristics. Islam has been flourishing in the arid region of scanty rain-fall stretching from the Mediterranean coast in the west to the Chinese wall in the east. Here the Muslims have lived and erected the great fabrics of their culture. This vast expanse of land has faced the cruelty and economy of a stern nature. For miles together there is no vegetation alive. Scanty pasturage and desert have fostered there the nomadic life. This coupled with emptiness between instants of time and points of space have deeply influenced the Muslim mind. It led to such mental characteristics as a quiet resignation and a calm submission to divine will, contempt for iconism, absence of plastic feeling, devotion to pure ideas, etc. This has reacted on the Muslim conception

The Cambridge History of India, Vol. III, Chapter XXIII ; *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)* by Percy Brown, Chapters III to XV ; and *A History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon* by V. A. Smith, Chapter XII.

of art. Moreover, for their religious needs the Muslims had to assemble in an open extensive place embodying sublimity, purity, peace and providing shelter for the congregation. Thus the Muslim art was conditioned by the leading characteristics of the Muslim mentality, practical needs of their religion and worship and the geography of their region. Consequently the salient features of the Muslim architecture were massive and extensive buildings and mosques, aspiring domes, tall minarets, lofty portals, open courtyards, pillared naves, huge walls all bereft of sculpture but adorned with a few mouldings, geometrical patterns and calligraphic inscriptions. On the contrary, India, the land of the Hindus, has been a country of vast unending plains irrigated by broad rivers, lofty mountains, impenetrable forests, a variety of seasons, abundant vegetation, exuberance of rains, thickly populated towns and villages where the wheel of life moves on with uninterrupted rhythm. Here the whole universe throbs with the intensity of life. Consequently the Hindus have evolved distinct mental characteristics and system of culture, peculiar and individual. What wonder then if such physical features and unique mental set up should have evolved certain system of architecture and we therefore find in the Hindu art vastness, stability, majesty, magnificence, sublimity, and infinite richness and variety. Like the Indian land, covered extensively with variety of beautiful flowers, leaves, creepers, plants etc., every inch of the Hindu buildings and temples was covered with the most elaborate carvings and profuse sculpture, all serving to manifest the Reality. The spiritual and aesthetic concepts of the Hindus were fully expressed in their art. Hindu religion and art have been inseparably linked together. With the advent of Islam the Hindu and the Muslim systems of architecture were synthesised. The followers of Islam brought in their train the art of different countries of the Western and Central Asia, Northern Africa and South-Western Europe. The happy fusion of these with the different indigenous styles of Hindu art led to the growth of new Indo-Islamic style of architecture, distinct and different in every province, like Jaunpur, Bengal, Bijapur, Gujrat etc.

Factors responsible for the blending of these two systems.

1. The foreign rulers and their followers being military adventurers did not bring with them craftsmen and sculptors. Consequently for the construction of their buildings they employed Indian masons. They possessed sufficient experience and independence to enable them to work out in their own manner and with their own materials such structures as were required to meet the needs of their new Muslim rulers. They introduced unconsciously Hindu architectural designs and decorations in the Muslim buildings.

2. The early Muslim sovereigns constructed their palaces, mosques, tombs and other structures out of the ready-made materials which they obtained by demolishing fortified towns, temples and other buildings of the infidels, the Hindus. Sometimes the spoils of the Hindu temples were supplemented by a certain amount of new and original masonry under the Islamic direction.

3. Many times the temples of the infidels were converted by the Muslim rulers into mosques by dismentling their Sikhars and roofs and erecting in their places domes and lofty minars. Moreover there was a common feature between the temples and the mosques. It was the open courtyard surrounded by chambers or colonnades. Temples which were built on this plan were easily converted into mosques to suit the needs of the new conquerors.

4. The spirit of toleration, harmony and a keen desire for synthesis paved the path for the fusion of the two systems of art.

Striking contrast between the architectural structures of the Hindus and the Muslims. The Hindu art was decorative and gorgeous, while the Islamic art was marked with puritanical simplicity. The basis of the Hindu art was trabeate, while that of the Muslim was arcuate. It means that the Hindus used rows of pillars and long beams laid horizontally to span spaces. The Muslims adopted arch to bridge a space and erected graceful domes. Rows of pillars were essential for the Hindus, while the *mihrabs* and the carved bow-shaped roofs for the Muslims. Solidarity and beauty were the special characteristics of the Hindu buildings, but spaciousness and simplicity of the Muslim

structures. The Hindu temples had splendid lofty *sikhars*, the Muslim mosques and tombs had magnificent bulbous domes. The walls of the Hindu temples were extremely solid, stable and divided into plinth and basement and stepped by deep projections ; the walls of the Muslim buildings were plain and smooth faced. The temples had 'massive darkness' and sombre passages leading to dim shrines and cells ; whereas the mosques had vast courts open to light and air coming through many doorways. The Hindu architecture exhibited an infinite richness and variety of sculpture. The Hindus conveyed their meaning by iconography and carved figure compositions. Their monuments were enriched with countless idols of divinities. The walls of their temples and buildings were pulsating with life and imagery. The variety of moulding and the richness of ornament was extraordinary in Hindu buildings. On the contrary the Muslims were fond of puritan simplicity and they were iconoclast. The representation of natural forms and human figures was prohibited by Islamic traditions and practices. For ornamentation the Muslims used colour and line or flat surface carving and ingenious geometric patterns.

Solidarity, stability and beauty were the special characteristics of the Hindu structures, whereas wide conception, massivity, severity and simplicity of the Muslim buildings. The Hindu art had happy synthesis of sublimity, sobriety, dignity and majesty. The Muslim art had abundance of space. The Hindu art was rich in symbols of *Kamal* (Lotus), *Kalash* etc. whereas the Muslim art lacked this.

Indo-Islamic architecture. Though both systems of art differed fundamentally in their ideals and techniques yet they mingled together giving rise to a new type of Indian architecture. This is described by scholars like Fergusson as "Indo-Saracenic" or "Pathan", while some like Havell have regarded it as entirely Indian, "in soul and body". They regarded it a modified form of Indian art. Some scholars like Sir John Marshall and Dr. R. C. Majumdar disagree with these two views, and point out that the Indo-Islamic art is neither merely a local variety of Islamic art, nor it is merely a "modified form of Hindu art". In fact like other aspects of culture of the time, it represented a

blending of Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain styles with those of Western and Central Asia and Northern Africa which the Islamic elements had brought with them in India. Consequently alterations came about slowly in architecture in the use of arch, style of ornamentation, composition of the various parts of the buildings, addition of certain minor features as *minar* and dome, utilisation of wide open spaces for structures and adoption of plain outlines of surfaces and smoothed walls as distinguished from the extremely mystic and richly decorated walls and pillars of the Hindu temples and buildings.

It is difficult to ascertain how much the Indo-Islamic architecture owed to the Hindu style and how much to the Islamic system. Historians have widely differed in their opinion about the significant question—whether the Hindu art or the Muslim art had predominant influence in the synthesis of these two arts ; which has exercised far-reaching, powerful and distinct influence. It is a controversial subject. The renowned art-critic Havell remarks that the Hindu influence is abundant and rich in the medieval art. The Muslim attitude towards art was profusely impressed by the Hindu art. The influence of the Hindu art is distinct on many Muslim structures of the medieval age. Fergusson, Smith and Elphinston hold the opinion that the Hindu influence was negative. It was confined to the upper level. Sir John Marshall observes that "Indo-Islamic architecture derives its character from both sources though not always in an equal degree." The Muslims had wonderful capacity to absorb Hindu art into their own and endowed it with a new and grander spirit.

Various factors contributed substantially to the evolution of the Islamic art in India. The Arabs who entered India had no liking for art. They could not comprehend the dignity and majesty of architecture. Contrary to this the Turks were liberal patrons of architecture. They brought into India that art of architecture which was evolved in Persia and it was synthesised with the Hindu architecture. "Wherever the Mohammedans established themselves—whether in Asia or in Africa or in Europe—they invariably adopted to their own needs the indigenous architecture which they found prevailing there." Thus, the Muslim architecture had already become a 'heterogenous pro-

duct' before it was introduced in India. Under the patronage of the Muslim rulers it assimilated in India new elements and enriched itself considerably. The truth is that the Muslims converted invariably Hindu temples, palaces and other structures into buildings and mosques. They adopted the indigenous style of architecture to suit their own needs. Thus, in transforming the art they had absorbed many ideals and methods of the Hindu art. The Muslim art is indebted to Hindu art for its grace and strength which according to Marshall were significant elements borrowed from the Hindus. Though the Muslim architecture was little influenced by the Hindu style in the vicinity of Delhi due to the numerical superiority of the Muslims, but the local Hindu style enjoyed greater ascendancy at Jaunpur and in the Deccan. There it completely overshadowed the Muslim style. In the province of Bengal the Muslims not only adopted the style of building in brick but adorned their structures with chiselled and moulded enrichment, frankly and liberally imitated from the Hindu structures. In Western India the beautiful Gujrati style of Hindu architecture was adopted by the Muslims in its entirety. In Kashmir they did the same with the remarkable wooden structures which had been long existing there.

The Muslims had added to the Hindu architecture the special characteristics of spaciousness, massiveness, majesty and width. The new foreign rulers introduced *mehrab* or arch, dome, *minar* and tomb in the indigenous architecture. They had enriched design and beauty and adopted the use of coloured stones and glazed tiles to heighten the effect of colours. They endowed the buildings with new beauties of form and colour.

Patterns of subtle curves, intricate and geometrical designs were used for rich decorative treatment. Sometimes the historic inscriptions and verses of the Quran in decorative, graceful letters were engraved on the Muslim places of worship. The design of the golden *Kalash* (the ornate lotus cresting and its metal finial) at the top of the *Sikhar* of Hindu temple was adopted by the Muslims in placing a stone *Kalash* on the domes of the mosques and tombs. The Hindu schemes of profuse ornamentation was applied to decorate the arches or *mehrabs*. The

Muslims adopted the Hindu techniques to make the structures more strong, stable and graceful. They learnt from the Hindus the proportionate massing of structures and their different parts.

The Muslim structures are of two types—(*a*) religious and (*b*) secular. The former consists of the mosque and the tomb. The latter includes such structures as intended for public and civic purposes such as pavilions, town-gates, houses, walls, gardens, palace-forts etc. The mosque has an open courtyard surrounded by a pillared verandah. For congregational prayers the side facing Macca is elaborated into a pillared hall or sanctuary with a wall at the back having a recess or alcove called a *mehrab* indicating the direction for prayer. There stands a pulpit on the right side of the *mehrab* and a high tower or minaret rising above the walls to summon the faithful to prayer. The sanctuary where the *mehrab* is enshrined is elaborated into the principle architectural feature with the courtyard and its cloisters leading upto it. There is a central graceful dome over the sanctuary. The tomb, constructed to mark the resting place of the dead, is an imposing structure of vaulted halls and towering domes enclosed within a spacious garden enshrining in the centre the grave of the dead. The tomb has a chamber in the centre of which is the cenotaph, the whole structure is being roofed by dome. In the ground underneath this building is the mortuary chamber called the *maqbarah* or *tah-khana* with the grave, a *kabra*, in the middle. Some of the large mausoleums have a mosque as a separate building, the whole being situated within one enclosure called a *rauza* ; some important tombs are named as *dargahs*.[1]

Imperial or Delhi Style of Architecture. On the whole the buildings of the Pathan rulers were imposing, magnificent and massive. They were beautifully furnished and sometimes were masterpieces of architectural skill. Though in the beginning the Muslim architecture was light and graceful, with the lapse of time it became heavy and solid. Muslim structures were erected in India from the days of the slave ruler

Indian Architecture (*Islamic Period*) by Percy Brown, p. 4.

Kutubuddin. The style which was used in the vicinity of Delhi is known as the Delhi style of architecture. The Kutub Minar, the Quwat-ul-Islam mosque at Delhi and a mosque at Ajmer called *Dhai Din Ka Jhonpara* belong to the time of the Slave kings. The material of Hindu temples and structures have been used in these buildings. In fact the above-mentioned mosques at Delhi and Ajmer were originally Hindu temples. Some of the parts of these temples were demolished and domes and arches were erected and Muslim designs and ornaments were added there. These two mosques and the Kutub Minar are the best specimens of the Delhi architecture. The Kutub Minar, originally a tower from which the mu'azzin could summon the faithful to prayer, was commenced by Kutubuddin and completed by Iltutmish. Percy Brown remarks that the Kutub Minar as "a whole is a most impressive conception, the vivid colour of its red sand stone, the changing texture of its fluted stories with their overlay of inscriptional bands, the contrast between the alternating spaces of plain masonry and rich carving, the shimmer of the shadows under the balconies, all combine to produce an effect of marked vitality." Its most pronounced quality is that of stability and its very shape decreasing as it rises illustrates 'man's highest endeavour to make his handiwork timeless'. Fergusson describes it as the most perfect example of a tower known to exist anywhere. It was purely a Islamic structure, because such towers were un-known to the Hindus till this time. Marshall remarks about the Kutub Minar that, "nothing, certainly, could be more imposing or more befittingly symoblic of Muslim power than this stern and stupendous fabric; nor could anything be more exquisite than its rich but restrained carvings." Shams-ud-din Iltutmish, a famous Slave king, constructed three buildings at Badaun, hundred fifty miles away from Delhi. They are the Hauz-i-Shamsi, the Shamsi-Idgah and the Jami Masjid. The last one is architecturally important as it is one of the largest and most substantially built example of the Delhi or Imperial style. Another famous building of the period is the mausoleum of Iltutmish at old Delhi. With the exception of Balban's Red Palace and his tomb at Delhi, which is an example of pure Muslim execution, no struc-

tures of any importance were produced during the period extending from the death of Iltutmish to the accession of Alauddin Khilji.

Sultan Alauddin Khilji constructed many palaces, forts and tanks, but the most remarkable of them were the palace of Hazar Situm, the fort and city of Siri, the Jamait Khan Masjid at the tomb or dargah of Nizamuddin Auliya, the Alai Darwaza at the Kutub Minar, the Hauz-i-Alai and the Hauz-i-Khas buildings. These buildings indicate that there was great reaction against the Indianisation of the Muslim architecture and Alauddin made the Arabian style of architecture the basis for his structures. His two well-known buildings the Jamait Khan Masjid and Alai Darwaja or the gateway of Alauddin are other famous specimens of the Delhi or Imperial style of architecture ; the latter is supposed to be one of the most treasured gems of the Islamic architecture in India. Its decorative treatment emphasises its beauty of form. It has outstanding gracefulness which lies in the shape of arches. It indicates a distinct progress in the evolution of the Islamic architecture in India.

The Khiljis were succeeded by the Tughlaks. Ghiyasuddin Tughlak built the city of Tughlaqabad and his own tomb under the walls of this city. It is remarkable for its simplicity and strength. His successor Mohammed Tughlak built the fortress of Allahabad and the town of Jahanpanah. But among the Tughlaks Firoz Shah was a magnificent builder. He had a passion for repairing ancient buildings and erecting new ones. He spent vast sums of money on the construction of many works of public utility and maintained a large number of craftsmen and architects at the cost of the State. He laid out several cities such as Firozabad, Fatehabad, Hissar and Jaunpur, and constructed many palaces, mosques, tanks and gardens. But "the architecture of the Tughlak period lost the splendour, luxuriance and variety which characterised that of the Slave and Khilji regimes; it became prosaic, simple, austere and formal." The Tughlaks produced at their best a stern, gloomy, spiritless and puritan architecture. If the Khilji architecture is celebrated for the lavish and elaborate use of ornament and richness of detail, the buildings of the Tughlaks are attractive for a chaste

sobriety which was gradually developed into a rigid puritanical simplicity. This was due to the puritan taste and narrow religious outlook of the Tughlak Sultans and comparatively poor condition of their finance. However, the tombs of Firoz Shah and that of his Prime Minister Khan-i-Jahan Tilangani, the city of Firozabad and its palace-fortress called the Kotla Firoz Shah are the best specimens of the Tughlak architecture. The pillars, doors, windows, brackets and other features of the Tughlak buildings indicate the influence of Hindu architecture.

The Tughlaks were followed by the Sayyid and Lodhi Sultans. The splendour and grace of the Khilji style of architecture was revived under them to some extent, but they could not "shake off the deadening effect of the Tughlak period." Owing to the much diminished influence of the Sayyids and Lodhis all forms of enterprise languished and what architecture was produced reflects the broken spirit of the time. Neither mosques of any importance nor public buildings of any kind were produced during their reign. But the best buildings of their period are the tombs of the kings and nobles, especially the tomb of Sikandar Lodhi. It is a very finished conception of the art of the period. Beautiful ornamentation in the interior of the dome of Sikandar's tomb and the design of its entrance exhibit Hindu influence. Besides the royal tombs, many mosques of a private nature attached to some tombs were also constructed. *Moth Ki Masjid* built by the Prime Minister of Sikandar Lodhi is such independent and notable structure. It has several conspicuous and attractive features. Among the mausoleums of the nobles the tombs of Bade Khan and Chhote Khan and *Shish Gumbad* deserve mention. The Muslim architecture under the Sayyids and Lodhis was gradually losing its rigid puritan conceptions and assimilating Hindu elements. An art critic remarks that "the architecture of the Lodhis was endowed with life and warmth by the magic touch of the Hindu genius." The Hindu features of the gates and facade of the Muslim buildings, the external dripstone of the mosque and the plaster ornamentation on the interior of the dome of a tomb bear testimony to the statement. However, the Imperial or Delhi style of architec-

ture in the form it finally assumed under the Lodhi Sultans was continued for nearly half a century more, partly due to its outstanding prestige and ancient lineage and partly on account of the disorder in the country during the regime of the early Mughals which precluded any other style taking its place. Ultimately it paved the way for the Mughal architecture.

Provincial Architecture

Certain regional manifestations of the Indo-Islamic architecture, distinct from the Imperial style at Delhi, were produced in provinces of the country and therefore they are designated as 'Provincial architecture'. Though the provincial architecture is subsidiary to the main style, some of its buildings are of remarkable beauty and exhibit definite original qualities. These provincial styles were modified by the indigenous arts of the region, unusual climatic conditions and technical differences, one kind of building material being common in some regions and rare in others.

Punjab. The earliest provincial style to emerge was in the Punjab. It was there that the first contacts with Islam were made through its two principal cities, Multan and Lahore. Percy Brown holds the opinion that the Muslim structures of Lahore were of Ghaznavide-Suljuqian origin, while those of Multan were of an Arab-Persian derivation, though Indo-Islamic art at both places had much in common. The structures at Lahore were made of timber and brick but there are no complete examples of the buildings of this period at Lahore. But at Multan the earliest buildings were two mosques. The first was erected by Mohammed bin-Qasim and the second by the Karmathians on the ruins of a temple. Besides these, five tombs of Muslim saints of the period still survive there, the most famous being the mausoleum of the saint Shah Rukn-i-Alam.

Bengal. The architecture in Bengal assumed a succession of forms which were maintained for a period of two hundred and fifty years. There developed a mixed style of architecture. It combined the Muslim art with the outstanding elements of Hindu art such as the use of brick, pointed graceful arches on short solid pillars, Hindu temple style of curvilinear cornices

and carved Hindu symbolic, attractive and decorative designs like the lotus. The important Muslim buildings in Bengal are found at Gaur or Lakhanauti, Tribeni and Pandua. The earliest Muslim structures in Bengal are the tomb and mosque of Zafar Khan Ghazi. But the most perfect example of the Bengal style are the Adina Masjid built by Sikandar Shah at Pandua and the *Dakhil Darwaza* built by Barbak Shah. The Adina Masjid presents a certain grave and stately dignity. *The Dakhil Darwaza* is a triumphal arch, aligned to face the citadel of Gaur. It is a superb example of brick and terracotta work and displays a surprising boldness of design and masterly skill. It "shows that the Muslim rulers still retained their grandiose ideals which found expression in spectacular monuments, not however devoid of architectural dignity and power." The other famous structures of the Bengal style are the *Chhota Sona Masjid* (Small Golden Mosque), and the *Bada Sona Masjid* (Great Golden Mosque), the mausoleum of Hussain Shah and the *Qadam Resul* mosque. The Great Golden Mosque "has the merit of greater simplicity and impressiveness". Fergusson considers it the *finest* memorial now left in Gaur. The Islamic architecture of Bengal is not a style of a very impressive kind when compared to others in design, execution and ornamentation.

Jaunpur. At Jaunpur a new style of architecture developed and its typical buildings were produced in the fifteenth century. The Jaunpur style reveals a happy blending of the Hindu and Muslim architectural ideas. It displays the indubitable influence of the Hindu art. "Its massive sloping walls, square pillars, smaller galleries and cloisters are clearly Hindu features, designed by Hindu masons." The Atala Masjid built on the site of the Hindu temple of Atala Devi is one of the brilliant specimens of the Jaunpur style. It has the freshness and vigour of the style and is expressive of the stimulating intellectual influences by which it was surrounded. The largest and most ambitious of the Jaunpur mosques is the Jama Masjid. Other buildings of the style are the Lal Darwaza Masjid (Red door Mosque), the Khalis Mukhlis Masjid and the broken facade of the Jhangiri and the Khalis Mukhlis. All the Jaunpur mosques

have no minars of the general Muslim type, but galleries; beautiful open-work screens were provided there for the accommodation of ladies. Fuhrer and Burgess have praised much the Jaunpur style of architecture. Sir John Marshall has admired the rich decoration of the structures of this style. According to Havell Jaunpur architecture is an interesting synthesis of the creative impulse of the Hindus and Muslims.

Gujrat. By far the largest, most important and finest of the Provincial Styles was that of Gujrat. The Indo-Islamic architecture rose in prominence in Gujrat on account of the assiduous patronage and building ambitions of Gujrat's Muslim rulers, the profound artistic traditions of the inhabitants and the employment of the most accomplished and resourceful artisans of the region. In such circumstances of all the provincial styles which emerged under the Muslim rule, the Gujrat style is the most indigenously Indian. The Muslim structures of Gujrat bear unmistakble signs of the influence of splendid Hindu style and its traditions, though modified in certain respects to suit the requirements of the Muslims. 'The breadth, the spaciousness, the chaste and the graceful elegance of the Hindu style' were synthesised liberally with the sense for symmetry and proportion of the Delhi style. Dr. Burgess while admiring the Gujrat style observes that it combines 'all the beauty and finish of the native art with a certain magnificence.' Percy Brown remarks that considerable portions of the Muslim buildings of Gujrat 'are adaptations and even entire extracts from either Hindu or Jain temples.' The Gujrat style is noted for its fine wood-carving, elaborate ornamentation and delicate graceful lattice work, all elements of Hindu architecture. The earliest Muslim buildings in Gujrat are the mausoleum of Shaikh Farid and Adina or Jami Masjid at Patna, and Jami Masjid at Broach, a port of Gujrat, and another Jami Masjid at Cambay which is noted for its graceful flying arch, fine proportions and dignified appearance. In the first half of the fifteenth century Ahmad Shah founded the capital city of Ahmedabad and adorned it with many buildings. The Jami Masjid of this city, having fifteen domes supported on two hundred pillars and finished in 1423, is generally considered the high water-mark of mosque

design in Gujrat. All the beauties of form and design of local Hindu style have been blended there so that it has become a thing of the spirit and it is said that this building speaks of that "silent flowering in stone of the souls of men, whose ways of life and thought had flowed into the things made by their hands." Other famous buildings are the *Tin Darwaza* (Triple Gate-way), a triumphal archway, the central feature of Ahmad Shah's processional route, linking his palace with the Jami Masjid, the tomb of Ahmad Shah at Ahmedabad and the tomb and mosque of Shaikh-Ahmed Khattri at Sarkhej six miles away from Ahmedabad. The mosque built at Champaner by Mahmud Begarha and the mosque of Rani Sipari at Ahmedabad are the most striking examples of rich magnificent Gujrat style exhibiting the profound influence of the Hindu art. Besides the mausoleums and mosques, other secular buildings like *baradis* or step-wells, irrigation works and numerous fruit gardens were also constructed in Gujrat.

Malwa. At Mandu, the capital of Malwa, now southern Madhya Bharat region, the Muslim rulers constructed numerous buildings which are marked by the predominance of Muslim art traditions of design and execution like those of Delhi. The native forms seem to have been suppressed and the Muslim buildings 'clung steadily to the pointed arch style.' The Jami Masjid, the *Hindola Mahal*, the *Jahaj Mahal*, Hushang Shah's tomb, *Asharfi Mahal*, and the palaces of Baj Bahadur and Rupmati are the specimens of the splendid architecture of Mandu. Hushang Shah's tomb is the first great tomb in India made wholly of white marble. It has certain pleasing features of design and dome. The *Hindola Mahal* (swinging palace) and the *Jahaj Mahal* are two contrasting buildings at Mandu representing the opposite and extreme poles of the Malwa architecture. 'Few buildings in India present a more striking appearance or more solidly constructed than this amazing Hindola Mahal.' Its inordinate thick walls slope at an angle of over seventy-seven degrees and thus create the illusion that the entire structure is swaying, hence it is designated Swinging Palace. The *Jahaj Mahal*, instead of having ponderous walling and excessive solidity, has lively and entertaining appearance and

is situated between two small lakes like a ship. Its open pavilions, recessed arches, arcaded front, overhanging balconies, arched halls, beautiful reservoirs, pillared compartments and cool corridors make it the most conspicuous building of Malwa. At Dhar nearly twenty-two miles away from Mandu there are two well-known mosques. One of them was Parmar Raja Bhoja's Sanskrit College converted into mosque. A few Muslim structures were also erected at Chanderi in northern Madhya Bharat. The most important of the Chanderi monuments are the Kushk Mahal and the Jami Masjid, which followed the Mandu traditions of art.

Khandesh. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the independent kingdom of Khandesh situated in the south of Malwa produced a number of buildings which display original and distinctive features. There is a group of tombs at Thalner in Khandesh. They are a pleasing variation of the Mandu type. The Jami Masjid and the Bibi-ki-Masjid and the large citadel and palace at Burhanpur are other notable buildings. But the Bibi-ki-Masjid displays more vitality and originality in its design and conception than other structures.

Kashmir. In the valley of Kashmir the Islamic structures were constucted almost entirely of wood and in due course assumed a singularly distinctive form. Sir John Marshall holds the opinion that the Kashmiri architecture, like other provincial style, displays the happy fusion of the Hindu and Muslim architectural ideals. The mosque of Shah Hamadan, a typical example of the wooden architecture, the Jami Masjid and the tomb of Zain-ul-Abdin's mother are the striking examples of the Kashmir art at Srinagar.

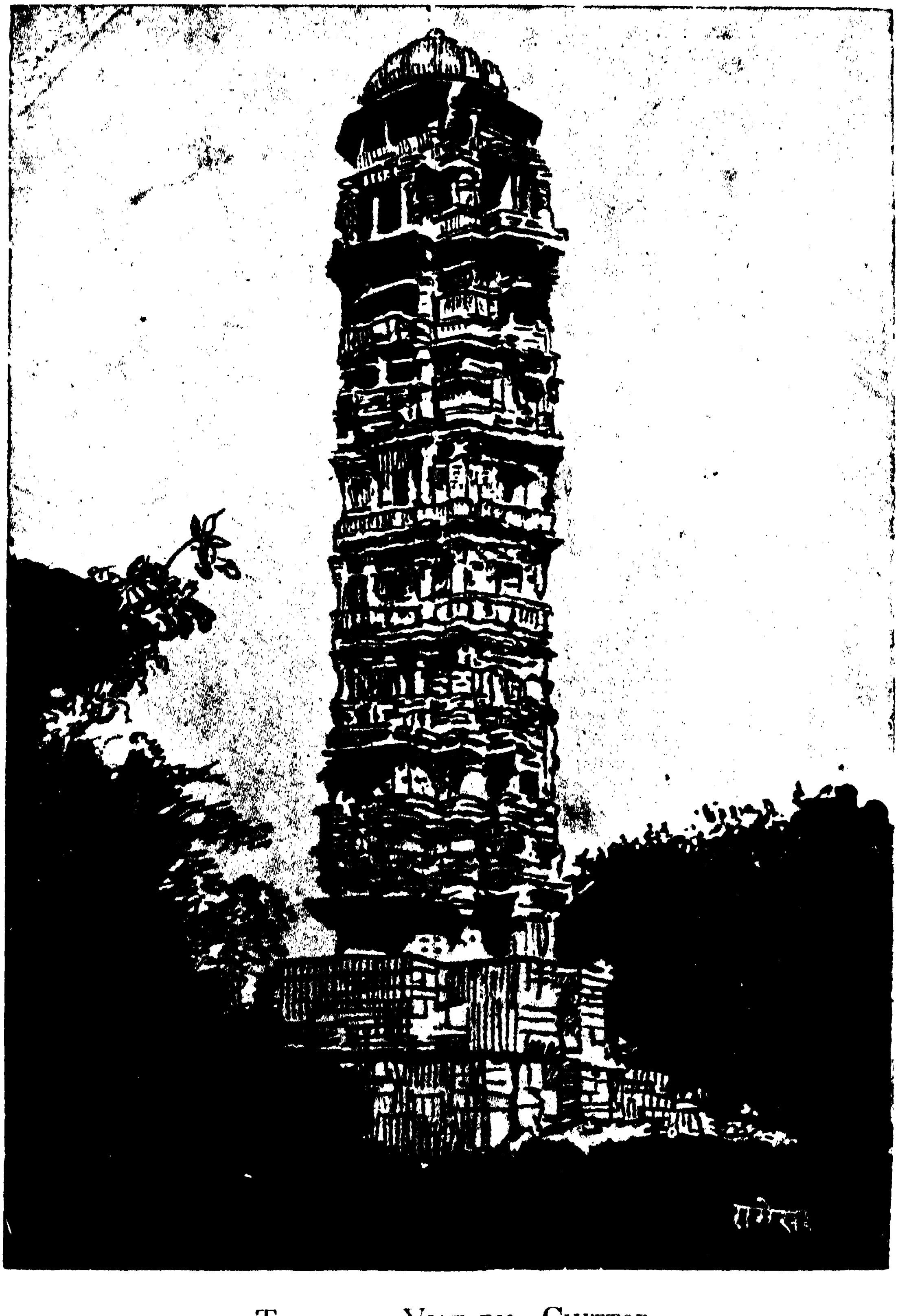
Deccan. In South India the Bahmani Sultans constructed numerous buildings both secular and religious. They bear traces of the native Deccan art. Marshall says that inspite of the Turkish, Egyptian and Persian elements in the architecture of the Bahmani Sultans the genius of the Indian artist rose superior to foreign influence and stamped itself more and more deeply on their structures. The buildings of the Bahmani Sultans are mostly found at Gulbarga, Bijapur and Bidar. The earliest prominent Muslim buildings are the Jami Masjid at Daulatabad

and Deval mosque at Bodhan (Nizamabad) near Hyderabad, the former was made up of materials from Hindu buildings and the latter was a star-shaped Jain temple converted into a mosque. In Gulbarga the Jami Masjid and the royal tombs, specially the mausoleum of Firoz Shah are the interesting Islamic monuments. The Jami Masjid is a rare example in India of a mosque with no open courtyard as the whole structure is covered by a roof. The tomb of Firoz Shah indicates growing Hindu influence in its carved and polished block stone pilasters and the drip stones and their elegant brackets. In Bidar some royal palaces like the *Rangin Mahal*, *Zenana Mahal*, Mosques and the *Madarsah* or college founded by Mahmud Gawan are the most famous buildings of the Bahmani Sultans. Of all the monuments at Bidar the most genuinely expressive of the Bahmani dynasty are royal tombs, the finest among them is the mausoleum of Ali Barid. The *Chand Minar* at Daulatabad is equally a celebrated Muslim building. "It is altogether a graceful conception, slender but stable, and exceedingly well balanced." Seven royal tombs and several mosques at Golkunda and the *Char Minar* or Four Minars, a triumphal archway, at Hyderabad are other striking examples of the Deccan architecture. There is a certain aesthetic excellence in the design and conception of the *Char Minar* ; 'it has strength without being aggressive, is dignified yet spirited.' But the most remarkable Bahmani architecture is found at Bijapur. Few cities in India have such profuse display of fine buildings as Bijapur. The Jami Masjid, the most powerfully simple, the Ibrahim Rauza (a mausoleum), one of the most elaborate and ornate, the Mithar Mahal most refined and delicate and the Gol Gumbaz (the mausoleum of Mohammed Adil Shah), showing the Bijapur architecture in its most grandiose form, are the splendid monuments of the Bahmani architecture in Bijapur. The Ibrahim Rauza rivals even the most splendid and finest Mughal buildings. The Mithar, Mahal a tall graceful building, 'has a uniqueness of its own showing the exuberance of the artist's fancy and delight.' 'The Gol Gumbaz is unquestionably one of the finest structural triumphs of the Indian builders. It creates awe and amazement in the mind of a visitor by its immense scale

and majestic bulk.' Percy Brown remarks that it is one of the largest and most remarkable single Muslim buildings in India. Besides these buildings, the Bahmani Sultans constructed many castles and fortresses which are admired lavishly by Meadows Taylor.

Hindu Architecture

While the Muslim Sultans were constructing splendid and dignified buildings all over the country, the independent Hindu princes continued their traditional patronage of art. They lavishly erected temples and Sanskrit colleges and built mighty fortresses but did not pay much attention to palaces. Consequently there flourished many local schools of Hindu architecture and sculpture fostered by different ruling dynasties. The distinct characteristics of the medieval Hindu architecture were narrow pillars of circular section with base and capital, pilasters, corbal brackets, cornice or *chhajja*, graceful tapering arch, lavish decorative designs and attractive well-proportioned figures. The traditions of the Hindu architecture and sculpture remained uninfluenced by the Islamic architectural ideas till the advent of the Mughals. However, they were gradually dominated more and more by religious influence and less by aesthetic ideas. They faithfully represented some religious concepts of the country. The conception of Natraj Shiva in Hindu sculpture is one of the few rich and valuable contributions of the medieval Hindu art especially in South India. The Vijayanagar emperors were great liberal patrons of fine arts and they constructed innumerable palaces, council halls, public offices, temples and aqueducts. They are considered by art critics as magnificent works of great beauty, aesthetic sense and craftsmanship and have been admired lavishly by foreign travellers. Fergusson has described the famous Vithala Temple constructed by Vijayanagar Emperor Krishna Deva Ray as the 'finest building of its kind in Southern India.' But the best specimens of the Hindu architecture of this period are to be found in Northern India, especially in Rajasthan. We come across a considerable number of temples, shrines, palaces, citadels and fortresses all over Northern India. But there is hardly any orginal conception of art. However, the Tower of Victory, constructed by



TOWER OF VICTORY—CHITTOR

Rana Kumbha and a Jain tower, both within the fort of Chittor, are extraordinary monuments of medieval architecture and sculpture. The mighty majestic fort of Kumbhalgarh and some splendid buildings were also constructed at Amber, the old capital of Jaipur state in Rajasthan. But ruins of Amber now produce an impression of unassailable strength and melancholy splendour.

Music. In the early years of the Delhi Sultanate the art of music did not advance due to the Quranic prohibition and religious conservatism of the Muslims. But later on contact with the cultured Hindus encouraged the Muslims to cultivate the art of music. Three factors further provided stimulus for it. First, the Sufi saints developed their devotional songs and poetry. Second, Hindu converts to Islam did not abandon their traditional *Bhajans*, devotional verses and other types of music. Third, Indian music had such an irresistible appeal to the Muslim heart that it could not be shunned entirely. It had very healthy effect on exuberance of Muslim feelings. All this inspired the Muslim society to take keen interest in music. Consequently great musicians like Khusrau were produced in the Sultanate age. It is said that he recited his poems in accordance with the Indian tunes and invented new *ragas* like Kawwalis and the Khyal. The Muslims had adopted the music instruments of the Hindus and their *Drupad raga*, introduced *Sitar* and *Tabla* for instrumental music and invented *Kawwalis* and the *Khyal*. But music made remarkable progress during the Mughal period. However, the trend for synthesis between the Hindus and the Muslims is also visible in the sphere of music during the period under review.

Coinage. Coinage of the Sultanate period, like music, displays Hindu-Muslim synthesis. The earliest Muslim coins had *Nagri* inscriptions. Mohammed Gori struck coins in imitation of the Hindu kings of Kannauj with the effigy of the Hindu goddess Laxmi on the obverse. Some Muslim coins had the effigy of Hindu god Shiva's Nandi or humped bull and king's name in the *Nagri* script on the obverse and Indian type of horseman on the reverse. In the early days of the Delhi Sultanate the name of Hindu king together with that of Muslim king were inscribed on the same coin.

Conclusion. Thus, in spite of the bitterness in political relations, the impact of Hindu and Muslim civilisations had far reaching consequences. The Muslim conquerors had brought with them definite social and religious ideas which differed fundamentally from those of the Hindus. Long association brought the two distinct groups of the Hindus and Muslims closer and closer with the result that the evolution of the Hindu culture was coloured with the Islamic tinge. But the Hindu culture in its own turn influenced the Islamic elements. In fact, the Hindus and Muslims have contributed their quota to the evolution of common cultural heritage. The medieval age witnessed the fusion and mingling of cultures but not absorption of one into the other. There was conflict betwen two cultures and then synthesis, though not a perfect one.

The reaction of Islam on Hinduism has been manifold. The conservative elements in Hindu society fortified their social and religious system by introducing elaborate and rigid caste rules, whereas the liberal elements accepted some democratic principles of Islam. The latter manifested themselves in the views of many saintly teachers and preachers like Ramanand, Kabir, Nanak, Dadu and Chaitanya. The growth of Vaishnavism in Bengal and the *Bhakti* cult in the South and Maharashtra are attributed to the impact of Islam on Hinduism. Another result was the spirit of harmony, toleration and co-operation expressed in the ideas of the Sufi saints and in the Hindu veneration for Muslim saints. The basis of Sufism has been profoundly influenced by the currents of Hindu thought.

Another important feature of the impact was the development of regional literatures and the growth of a new language—Urdu. The Vaishnava poetry of the vernacular literature was a miracle of synthesis of Islam and Hinduism. In society, rigidy of the caste barriers, infanticide, seclusion of women and their dependence on men, early marriage, a new costume, customs and conduct, and fashions and festivals mark the social order of the day. The learned authors of '*An Advanced History of India*' rightly remark that 'the preachings of the saintly teachers of India with their ideal of uplift of the masses, the tolerant ideas of the Sufi saints and scholars and the growth

of the Indian provincial literature, might be regarded as signs of modernism appearing as a result of the fusion of two civilisations.'

The Indo-Muslim kings made remarkable contribution in the sphere of architecture. The great art critic Fergusson remarks, "Nothing could be more brilliant and at the same time more characteristic than the commencement of the architectural career of these Pathan kings."

In the domain of art, the foreign conceptions of the arch, the dome and the minaret were combined with the traditions of Hindu art. The Hindu and Muslim elements coalesced to form a new type of architecture. The severity and simplicity of the Muslim architecture was mellowed down and the plastic exuberance of the Hindu architecture was curtailed. The Muslim emphasis on harmony and form blended with Hindu emphasis on splendour and decoration. 'The craftsmanship, ornamental richness, and general design remained largely Hindu, the actuated form, plain domes, smooth-faced walls and spacious interiors were Muslim superimpositions."[1]

Influence of Islam on Indian Culture by Dr. Tarachand, p. 243.

Chapter 14

Indian Culture and the Mughals

Establishment of the Mughal Rule

Zahir-ud-din, surnamed Babar, a prince of Farghana in Central Asia, invaded India and in April 1526 defeated Ibrahim Lodhi, the Sultan of Delhi and in the following year he won a notable victory at Kanwah over Rana Sanga. This led to the establishment of the Mughal rule in India. Babar was succeeded by his son Humayun (1530-1540 and 1554-1555) who had to consolidate his hold in northern India. To achieve this end, he attacked Gujrat and there secured partial victory over Bahadur Shah, but he was defeated in a carefully planned campaign by the Afghan leader Sher Khan and was exiled to Persia.

The Suri Dynasty (1540-55) *and Sher Shah Suri* (1540-45). Sher Khan ascended the throne of Delhi as Sher Shah and founded the Suri Dynasty in 1540. His sound civil administration, original land reforms, works of public utility, and policy of toleration and justice entitle him to rank among the greatest sovereigns of India. He was the first who attempted to found an Indian Empire broadly based upon the people's will. He stands as the ideal of new India—the India of Hindus and Mussalmans united in heart and spirit. The successors of Sher Shah were weak. Utilising the opportunity provided by the chaotic condition in India at this time, Humayun returned from Persia and invaded India and regained his kingdom of Delhi after fifteen years of absence.

Restoration of Humayun and its cultural importance. The restoration of Humayun brought in its train the Persian influence in India. His years of stay in the Persian Empire gave to the empire of his successors a definitely Persian character. The nobles who accompanied to Persia and the Iranians who returned with him to India formed a nucleus for the Persianisation. Besides this, there was also the continuous flow of Persian adventures of the Mughal Empire for the next hundred years to a large extent was coloured by the Persian cultural elements.

Akbar (1556-1605) *and the establishment of a national monarchy under the Mughals.* Humayun was succeeded by his son, Akbar, and soon after his succession he defeated a great rival Hemu in the battle of Paniput in 1556. The Afghan rule came to an end and the Mughal rule began instead. Shaking off the tutelage of Bairam Khan, his guardian and the petticoat government of his foster-mother Maham Anaga, Akbar embarked on his aggressive and ambitious scheme of conquests. After a series of campaigns he conquered and annexed Malwa, Gondwana, Gujrat, Ranthambor, Chittor, Bengal, Kabul, Kashmir, Sind, Balochistan, Orissa and Ahmednagar. Within twenty years after his succession he established his sway over the whole of northern India except Mewar whose Rana, Pratap, had refused to bend his knees to the 'Turk'. Then he initiated new policies. By his liberal policy of friendship towards the Rajputs and his matrimonial alliances with them, his abolition of the pilgrim tax and the poll tax or *Jaziya* on the Hindus and by his policy of religious toleration and employing Hindus in higher ranks, Akbar mitigated the foreign character of his rule and created a national State. His statesman-like policy of conciliating Hindus paved the path for a national monarchy. His social reforms, his revenue and Mansabdari systems and good and sound civil administration entitle him to be called the real founder of the Mughal Empire. The efficacy of his wise policies was seen in the reigns of his successors—Jahangir and Shah Jahan—and it was only when Aurangzeb unwisely reversed his policies that the death knell to Mughal Empire was sounded.

Jahangir (1605–1627). Akbar was succeeded by Jahangir. He followed the policies laid down by Akbar, brushing aside

only the extravagance of the Din Ilahi. His reign on the whole was fruitful of peace and prosperity to the Empire. But since the influence of Nur Jahan and her family the Persian cultural elements crept in the court and the empire.

Shah Jahan (1627–58). After a hard struggle Shah Jahan succeeded Jahangir. Suppressing the revolts of the Bundelas and Khan Jahan Lodhi, he waged wars against the Deccan Sultans of Golkunda and Bijapur and succeeded in establishing Mughal suzerainty over them. He unsuccessfully intervened in Central Asia to conquer Balkh as a part of his hereditary dominions. He fully maintained the national character of the State. He never alienated his Hindu subjects and firmly adhered to the political alliance with the Rajputs. Shah Jahan was the greatest builder among the Mughals and his reign has been rightly called the golden age of the Mughal period ; it marked the climax of the Mughal Empire, but it also sowed the seeds of decay.

Aurangzeb (1658–1707). After a disastrous fratricidal war Aurangzeb ascended the throne of Delhi. From the very beginning he reversed Akbar's policy of national State and attempted to restore the Islamic character of the State. By his orthodoxy and advocacy of Islamic principles, his active anti-Hindu policy (demolition of temples, oppressive taxes on Hindu merchants, re-imposition of the poll tax, dismissal of Hindu officials, discontinuation of the Hindu customs in the court, forcible conversion of Hindus, etc.) and by his severance of the healthy relations with the Rajputs, he created a theocratic State and the national State ceased to exist. "There cannot be a great and lasting empire without a great people, and no people can be great unless it learns to form a compact nation with equal rights and opportunities for all." Aurangzeb was not fitted by his character and ideas to create such a compact nation. Akbar laid the foundation of the Mughal empire and created a national State, but Aurangzeb destroyed it.

Aurangzeb was followed by a long line of weak successors, the last of whom Bahadur Shah was deposed and exiled after the mutiny of 1857 by the British to Rangoon where he died in confinement in 1862.

The rise and the fall of the Marathas. In Maharashtra, the Bhakti movement aroused the national spirit during the dark days of the Muslim rule and it culminated in the rise of a leader in the person of Shivaji (1627-1680). He organised the Marathas in a military fold with a sense of national mission, broke away from Bijapur and defeated all attempts of the Bijapur and Mughal armies to bring him to book and later he gave a rude shock to Aurangzeb by escaping from the Mughal custody and set up a Hindu State in the teeth of opposition. As a patriot, general, administrator and statesman, Shivaji stands very high among his contemporaries. He was the last constructive genius that Hindu India produced.

Shivaji was succeeded by his son Sambhaji (1680–89). During his reign internal quarrels sapped the strength of the Maratha State. In 1689 he was captured and slain by Aurangzeb and his minor son Shahu was brought under his protection. This was followed by a prolonged war with the Mughals for Maratha independence. After the death of Aurangzeb, Shahu returned to Maharashtra and ascended the throne at Satara. Shahu's reign introduced the powerful Peshwa regime in Maharashtra. The second Peshwa Baji Rao (1720-40) enunciated the principle of Hindu-pad-Padshahi—the creation of an all India Hindu Empire with Maharashtra as its centre. This conception was gradually materialised in the reign of the third Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao (1740-1761) when the Maratha Empire embraced nearly the whole of India. The imperial authority of the Mughals was totally broken down by the Marathas when they dictated peace terms to the puppet emperor in 1757. Only the shadow of the Mughal Emperor was reigning at Delhi now. This inevitably brought the Marathas in conflict with the Muslim powers led by the Afghan ruler Ahmad Shah in 1761 at the field of Panipat. The battle of Panipat went against the Marathas, but they quickly recovered from its shock.

After 1761 the Maratha power in the northern India became stabilised under the great Maratha feudatory kings—Scindhia at Gwalior, Holkar at Indore, Bhonsale at Nagpur and Gaikwad at Baroda. By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, all these four powers were gradually defeated by the British

and the last vestige of the independent Maratha power disappeared.

Life Under The Mughals[1]—Social Conditions

1. *Structure of Society.* Society in Mughal times was organised on the feudal basis with the king at its apex. Next in rank to the king were official nobles or Mansabdars who enjoyed special privileges and honours. Though nobility included foreign elements, none of them was allowed to carry country's wealth outside. Below the nobles was a small and frugal middle class and below it were lower classes. A wide gulf divided the rulers and the ruled.

2. *The Mughal nobility and high luxurious standard of living.* The nobles rolled in wealth and comforts and the rich, with abundant resources at their disposal, indulged in luxury and intemperance. 'Excessive addiction to wine and women was a very common vice' of the age. Pelsaert writes, "The palaces of the rich were adorned internally with lascivious sensuality, wanton and reckless festivity, superfluous pomp, inflated pride and ornamental daintiness." All this naturally produced vast difference between the standard of the rich and the nobles and that of the common people. A wide gulf divided the two. The most noticeable factor in the life of the Indian courts and of the nobility at this time was the unparalleled sense of luxury. The court of the king was the centre of wealth and culture. It was Akbar who started the Mughal court on its career of magnificence. When the emperors travelled the imperial magnificence was in no sense relaxed, and it was the capital in all its magni-

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[1] Refer to *A Short History of Muslim Rule in India* by Dr. Iswariprasad, Chapter XVIII ; *An Advanced History of India* by Dr. Majumdar and others, Book II, Chapters VI, VII and VIII ; *Crescent in India* by Prof. S. R. Sharma ; *Social and Economic Conditions in Medieval India* by Ashraf ; *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV; *Text-Book of Modern Indian History* by Sarkar and Dutta ; *Development of Cultural Relation between Hindus and Muslims*, in the Calcutta Review, 1935 ; *Foreign Travellers in India* by E. F. Oaten ; *India at the Death of Akbar* by Moreland ; *From Akbar to Aurangzeb* by Moreland ; *History of Aurangzeb* by Sir J. N. Sarkar ; *Mughal Empire* by S. R. Sharma.

ficence that moved. 'Even when directing campaigns in distant parts the court bore no Spartan appearance.' The nobles in imitation of the emperor, the court and their patrons led an extravagant and luxurious life. Though the nobles had such virtues as generosity, magnanimity, gallantry, love for learning and fine arts, deep sense of self-respect etc., but they were selfish, debased and most luxurious. They exploited the labour community and the lower classes and misused their wealth.

In dress, diet and methods of living the nobles and the higher classes showed the spirit of luxury. Brocades, printed silk and muslin were the common dress of well-to-do persons and the great nobles. The king and his nobles took great pride in putting on costly dresses and valuable jewellery. We know from Abul Fazal that one thousand complete suits of costly silks were prepared for Akbar every year. Dinners were sumptuous and daintly dishes were provided as is written by Sir Thomas Roe. The austere and simple food of the Hindus was replaced among higher classes by rich spiced and special preparations, like the pilaws, birianis and the varied and rich foods of the Middle East. The Hindu nobles began to have great sumptuous feasts in imitation of the manner of the Persian and Central Asian chiefs and Amirs. 'Rare fruits, mysterious decoctions, refinements of the culinary art to suit jaded plates,' which society of Persia evolved, found their way into India and they soon gained popularity with the richer and upper classes among Hindus and Mohammedans alike. Meat became a common article of food and in the summer all the ranks used ice, but the nobles used it throughout the year. Fruits were frequently and commonly used and fresh fruits were imported from Bokhara and Samarkand.

Drink was a common evil confined only to the upper classes and a large number of persons died of intemperance. All the Mughal emperors except Aurangzeb indulged in liquors. The harems were a common feature of the age and from the king down to the nobles everybody maintained a large number of women maid-servants and dancing girls. According to Abul Fazal, Akbar had a seraglio of 5,000 women supervised by a

separate staff of female officers.[1] Thousands of rupees were spent lavishly on the women of the harems and at times sumptuous feasts were offered for mistresses. Women had no independent existence. They were regarded as means for sensual pleasures. Though there were restrictions against the use of opium, liquor and other intoxicating drugs and gambling but they were not rigidly enforced by the authorities. The nobility and the upper classes frequently and freely indulged in these. Humayun's addiction to opium-eating and Jahangir's excessive drinking are well-known to us. The houses of the nobility and the wealthy were lavishly decorative and palatial.

With the closing years of the reign of Shan Jahan, the nobles began to lose their old usefulness and grew more demoralised. During the reign of Aurangzeb and in the eighteenth century, further deterioration set in. Their rivalries and conspiracies cast a malign influence on social life.

3. *Middle class people.* The middle class people were not given to "ostentatious expenditure" but they lived on a standard suited to their respective professions. The lesser officials of the court lived according to the standard which was determined by the nature of the work they had to do. On the whole, as Mr. Moreland points out, the life these people led was tolerably comfortable. The merchants generally led simple and temperate lives. They used either to conceal their wealth or to lead highly frugal lives lest they be deprived of their wealth by the local governor or *Faujdar.* The merchants living on the western coast, especially Gujrat, had made much wealth out of their extensive commerce both internal and external. Consequently they maintained a high standard of life and lived in a rich style and indulged in luxuries. They had no fear of losing their wealth.

4. *Lower classes.* Artisans, labourers, agriculturists, villagers, etc. were included in the lower classes. Their life was hard as compared with that of the two higher classes. Their clothing was scanty ; woollen garments or silken clothes and shoes were beyond their means. Under normal conditions there was no starvation, but in times of drought, famine and

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[1] *Ain-i-Akbari* by Blochmann, pp. 44-45.

scarcity, their miseries must have been very great. From the account of Franscisco Pelsaert we learn that there were three classes of people whose status was little removed from slavery. They were workmen, peons, servants and shopkeepers. Their food and houses were poor and they were subject to the oppressions of the imperial officers and nobles who exploited them most. The number of servants was large because the wages were low. Honesty was rare among them and they demanded *dastur* to supplement their wages. The shopkeepers and business men, though sometimes rich and respected, generally kept their wealth hidden. They had to suffer a good deal of loss as they had to supply various articles to the king, his officers and nobles at less than the usual market rates.

During the days of Akbar the peasantry led a comfortable life as the state demand was fixed and the attitude of the king was benevolent. But 'towards the end of Shah Jahan's reign, the peasants were more harassed by the provincial governors, their condition became worse and the evil of pauperism increased.' Bernier is of the opinion that the peasants and artisans in the upper provinces suffered from cruel oppression.

5. *Condition of Women.* Though the condition of women as a whole showed a marked deterioration due to the rigidity of the *Pardah*, the Mughal period produced some notable women in India. The great learned women of this period were Mughal princesses, Jahanara, the partisan of Dara, Roshanara, the partisan of Aurangzeb, Zebunissa, the daughter of Aurangzeb, whose verses have come down to us, Chand Bibi of Ahmednagar, Tarabai, the regent in Maharashtra, Nur Jehan, the empress, and Jijabai, the mother of Shivaji. 'On the whole, the Hindu womanhood maintained its tradition, receiving its strength from religion and usage, but in proportion to general advancement which the period shows, there is no evidence of progress.' Infanticide, child marriage and *sati* were very much in vogue among the Hindus. Polygamy was common feature of the age.

6. *Means of entertainment.* There were several means of entertainment during the Mughal age. All the Mughal emperors had keen interest in sports and exercises. Gambling,

polo, animal-fighting were in vogue and people were fond of wrestling and pigeon-flying. Hunting was frequently resorted to. Besides this, people took great delight in chess, dice and other indoor games. In short, there were various kinds of sports and amusements in which the nobles and officials took part.

7. *Dress and ornaments.* The Mughal age is famous for its fondness of costly dresses. Embroidered or printed silken clothes were put on by the upper classes. Beautiful fine muslin was also used for the common dress. 'Apart from the caste mark which distinguished the Hindus, the dress of both the Hindu and Muslim nobles was practically identical.' They wore similar dresses and ornaments. The magnificence of the imperial court compelled them to use costly dress and valuable jewellery, beautifully designed and gracefully made. Though the ordinary Hindu still put on his *dhoti*, as he does now, the higher classes accepted the *pajamas* and the *achkan* as the ceremonial costume befitting their dignity and rank. The Hindus had adopted the dress and manners of the Muslims.

8. *Social habits, practices and customs.* 'The vice of intemperance was not so common among the ordinary people as among the rich and the nobles.' People in general were temperate in their diet, and were civil and hospitable to strangers. Hindus were clever businessmen and the Muslims practised all crafts except dyeing and weaving. Both believed in the maxims and predictions of the science of astrology. People of every class were sunk deep in superstitions. Both the Hindus and the Muslims worshipped the shrines or tombs of the saints. The Hindus, the Sikhs and the Mohammedans, all the three communities, rendered services to a number of *Pirs*, Prophets, preceptors and *mahants* and it was expected that they would display marvellous feat of mysticism. There existed deep hatred and prejudice between the Shias and Sunnis and they called each other *Kafirs* or infidels. Slavery was a common feature of the age. It was a mark of unprogressive element in society and it hindered the moral and intellectual advancement of the society. The Ganga was considered to be sacred and the pilgrims used to have a dip in its water. The Muslims worshipped the Pirs and Prophets of their faith and on the occasion of

"Id" cows were not sacrificed. As noted above prominent social practices of the age were sati, child marriage, *kulinism* or infanticide and the dowry system. Akbar sought to check such evil social practices as marriage before puberty by either party and marriages between near relatives. He discouraged acceptance of high dowries and polygamy, but in vain. In Maharashtra widow-marriage was prevalent to some extent as among the *Jats* of the Punjab and the Jamuna Valley and polyandry was practised among the latter. The Hindus mainly celebrated *Holi*, *Dashahra* and *Rakshabandhan* festivals. On festival days they wore beautiful dresses and valuable jewellery, arranged interesting concerts and offered mutually sumptuous feasts. The principal festivals of the Muslims were *Id*, *Bakrid* and *Muharram*. Like the Hindus they arranged for various entertainments on their festival days. Caste-system and untouchability continued among the Hindus ; they were not relaxed in any way.

Travernier who visited India in the reign of Shah Jahan praises the Hindus as thrifty, sober and honest people and says "Hindus are morally well, when married they are rarely unfaithful to their wives. Adultery is rare among them and one never hears of unnatural crimes."

9. *Social deterioration.* In the earlier part of Shah Jahan's reign there was peace and plenty, but afterwards at the close, the condition of the people became worse. Beggary was prevalent among them. During the reign of Aurangzeb the condition of the people steadily declined. The Mughal nobility lost its moral stamina on account of women, wine and wealth. The standard of public morality was also not high and lesser officials accepted bribe without shame or scruple. The noble conception of public welfare was fast disappearing in the sphere of administration. There was a vast amount of human poverty and misery in the country. The glittering imperial court became a strong hold of luxurious, jealous, wicked and flattering nobles. Gallantry, scholarship, magnanimity and high tone of morality of feudal lords and courtiers had disappeared. The country was torn to pieces by civil wars and groaned under every kind of domestic confusion. Superstition had taken place of true religion. Wor-

ship of *sadhus* and *fakirs* was gaining ground. Villainy was practised in every form. Even the mosques were not free from vices. People began to have great faith in magic, witch-craft and sorcery and sometimes human beings were sacrificed to ensure successful experiments in alchemy. By the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the next "in social usage, in politics, in the realm of religion and art, we had entered the zone of uncreative habit, of decadent tradition and ceased to exercise our humanity."

10. *The spirit of synthesis.* But as pointed by the learned authors of *An Advanced History of India* one redeeming feature in this age of all round regrettable deterioration 'was the continuity of the process of Hindu-Muslim reapproachment and amicable contact between the members of the two communities inspite of bitter political rivalries.' Consequently the spirit of synthesis and mutual harmony led to the growth of a new synthesised culture which was neither purely Hindu nor entirely Muslim, but a happy fusion of the best elements of the two. Akbar's reign is important and instructive for the spirit of Hindu Muslim synthesis and harmony. Religious synthesis was displayed in Akbar's religious policy of appeasement and the Din-i-Ilahi. He offered a religion which was free from the caste-restrictions, dominance of the priestly class and external ritualism. It laid emphasis on monotheism and high tone of morality. Religious toleration, intimate social relationship and love for each other reached their climax under prince Dara Shikoh. He argued that there existed only verbal differences between Hindu and Muslim mysticism and had written his famous *Majma-ul-Bahrayan* to explain where the 'two seas' of mystic thought meet. During the reign of Aurangzeb the Satnami and the Narain sects endeavoured to bring within their folds both the Hindus and Muslims. The Satnami sect had the Hindu as well as Muslim followers. The Satnamis used to offer prayers facing east five times a day; they included Allah in their names for God and instead of cremating their dead buried them. In the realm of art the Persian and Indian styles of architecture mingled happily and its excellence was exhibited in the magnificent buildings of Akbar and Shah Jahan. Simi-

larly the Mughal painting displays the beautiful fusion of the Indian and foreign techniques. Laying out extensive and beautiful gardens is a legacy of the Mughals. Akbar's desire to weld the peoples into a unity and social cohesion led to the Hindu-Muslim synthesis in dress, diet, etiquette and modes of living. In the Hindu wedding ceremony *Sehra* and *Jama* came into vogue, *Pajama* and *Achkan* formed ceremonial costume and new delicious sweets like *Balushai*, *Gulabjamun*, *Barfi*, *Pulaw* etc. were included in the articles of food. *Hukka* and tobacco were used by the Hindus as well as Muslims. Birth of a male child was celebrated with musical entertainment by both communities. Ladies' ornaments in both communities were identical. Literature could not escape the happy fusion of the two cultures. Vocabulary of the various Indian vernaculars—Hindi, Bengali, Marathi and Gujrati—were enriched with the Persian and Arabic words. There was a free exchange of views between the two communities and both freely participated in other's functions. If the Hindus began to observe the Muharram festival, Abdullah Khan, one of the Sayyid brothers, celebrated the *Basant* and *Holi* festivals of the Hindus; Siraj-ud-daulah and Mir Jafar, Nawabs of Bengal, enjoyed the famous *Holi* festival with their friends and relatives and the *Durga Puja* was celebrated splendidly at the Mughal court in Delhi as late as 1825 A. D. In Madhya Bharat Daulat Rao Scindhia and his officers participated in Muharram celebrations in green dress like Mohammedans. In short, as Panikkar remarks, the dress, manners, social amenities and festivals which the Mughals introduced in India ceased to be foreign and were accepted by the people.

Economic Conditions

Babar has given us a description of the economic condition of the people of India in his *Memoirs* but it is far from accurate. There is a passing mention in Gulbadan Begam's *Humayun-Namah* of the cheap prices of articles that prevailed in Hindustan and it is stated that at Amarkot in Rajasthan four goats could be had for one rupee. The comprehensive economic reforms introduced by Sher Shah must have affected an all round improvement in the economic condition of his subjects. Akbar's

reign introduced a period of peace and prosperity. According to Smith the labourers in the reign of Akbar had possessed more provisions than what their community has today. But in the Mughal age there was an uneven distribution of wealth among the various classes as it is now. The skeleton of society was based on the exploitation of the lower classes. However, the general economic condition of the people was better than what it is today.

Prosperous cities. During the period of great Mughals prosperity and plenty prevailed in the chief cities. According to the European visitors of the period Lahore and Agra were among the greatest towns of the world at the time. Burhanpur in Khandesh and Ahmedabad in Gujrat were great cities. In eastern India there was much opulence in cities like Banaras, Patna, Rajmahal, Bardwan, Hugli and Dacca. There was abundance of rice, corn and other necessaries of life. Allahabad, where Akbar erected the great citadel, soon assumed importance, because of its strategic position and the value of the river-borne trade to the new European trading concerns on the Bengal coast. Agra was the main capital of the empire, but after Shah Jahan, Delhi assumed that role.

Communications. For the vast mercantile traffic there were good means of communications in the form of roads and rivers. With the exception of certain high-ways, the roads were generally unmetalled, but clearly defined by long avenues of trees, *piaus* (places for providing water) and *sarais* where travellers and merchants could pass the night comfortably in comparative security. Normally, the journeys were safe enough and effective action was taken by local authorities to keep the roads clear of thieves, dacoits, etc. though certain areas acquired a bad name in this connection. Strangers in India could take their womenfolk with them while travelling. The ancient tradition of road-building activity in the State was imitated by the Sur rulers and followed by the Mughals. The main centres of the empire were controlled by a reasonable extensive road system. Sher Shah completed the grand trunk road, a legacy of the Mauryans. Communications with Bengal, one of the main provinces, were kept in an efficient state. Another important and long road

linked Agra with Ahmedabad in Gujrat and from there to Surat and to the commerce of the world. It was the main commercial route of the Mughal empire. The road to the south was kept in a good state due to the Deccan campaigns, a regular feature of the imperial policy. The rivers afforded excellent means for the carriage of heavy traffic. Along the Ganges, the waterways were very popular and fleets of river boats sailed down this great highway at frequent intervals from Allahabad to Bengal in the east.

Agriculture. The crops of the Mughal time were much the same as those of today. Sugar-cane and indigo, cotton and silk were cultivated extensively in certain parts of the country. Tobacco, introduced in India either in 1604 or early in 1605, began to be cultivated regularly by the people thereafter. Agricultural implements and methods were very much the same as those of the present day. Adequate means of irrigation did not exist. The peasants were no doubt more prosperous than other classes of the population, but they were often subject to the oppression and exactions of local officers. They also suffered most from the chronic wars and military marches which did a great injury to the crops.

Famines and epidemics. The sufferings and grievances of the peasants and people knew no bounds during the frequent famines, "because the Mughal State then made no systematic and prolonged efforts to provide relief and affected no substantial remissions in revenue collection. The little that they did was insufficient to alleviate the acute miseries of the myriads of the people who died of starvation and the pestilence that closely followed it." (*An Advanced History of India*, p. 571) Cholera and influenza were the common diseases in the country.

Industry and crafts. During the period under review there was extensive and varied industrial activity of the people. It supplied the needs of the local aristocracy and merchants and met the demands of traders coming from the different countries of Europe and various parts of Asia. The most important industry of the time was the manufacture of cotton. It was not confined to any particular region, but distributed all over the country. There were many principal centres of cotton manufacture

throughout the country, for example, Patan in Gujrat, Burhanpur in Khandesh, Jaunpur, Banaras, Dacca, and some other places in the U. P., Bihar and Bengal. They were reputed for the manufacture of delicate muslin fabrics. Chanderi in Madhya Bharat was also famous for its fine cloth. Masulipatam for its prints, Surat for its borders and Banaras for its rich brocades. Besides this, shawls at Lahore and carpets at Fatehpur Sikri were also manufactured. Cloth was exported from India to the countries east of the Cape of Good Hope, Middle East, Burma, Malaya, Java, etc. The dyeing industry, too, was in a flourishing condition. Coarse cotton cloths were either dyed or printed with a "variety of well-shaped and well-coloured flowers or figures which were so fixed in the cloth that no water could wash them out."

Silk industry received a considerable impetus in the reign of Akbar due to the royal patronage. In addition to Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri and Gujrat, Bengal was the premier centre of silk production and manufacture. Woolen goods, chiefly coarse blankets, were also woven at many places. Though India lost ancient maritime activity the ship-building industry did not disappear in this age, and there are references to it in contemporary literature. The Mughals had established a centre in the Bay of Bengal where they constructed ships. In Cutch, Cambay and other port-towns ships of considerable size were built. Indian ship-building had such a high reputation in India that even the Portugese had some of their best ships built in India at this time. Saltpetre, which was used chiefly as an ingredient for gunpowder in India and exported outside by the Dutch and the English traders in India, was manufactured in many parts of the country, particularly in the Deccan and Bihar.

Besides these major industries, various other crafts were practised during the Mughal period. Many curious boxes, trunks, standishes (pen-cases), ornamental disks, draught boards, writing cases, inlaid in ivory and ebony, and similar other goods were manufactured in large quantities.

Many artisans of all kinds worked for the state in the imperial workshops or *karkhanas* at Lahore, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri

and Ahmedabad. In the 17th century, Bernier saw many of them. The governors of the provinces patronised local products as they had to supply the Emperor with the choicest articles produced in the area. But according to Bernier weavers and craftsmen were not treated well. Nobles and officers forced them to sell goods at low prices and exacted from them forbidden *abwabs*.

Prices. As the plenty of provisions was very great throughout the country, the prices of articles, mainly those of common consumption like rice, vegetables, spices, meat, livestock and milk were very low. A Hindustani and Kashmiri sheep could be had for Rs. 1/8/- each and a cow in the province of Delhi for Rs. 10/- and mutton was sold at 65 *dams* per *man* which was equal to the two-thirds of the present *man* of 40 seers. Wages were also low ; an unskilled labourer generally earned 2 *dams* or $\frac{1}{20}$ part of a rupee per day, but a highly skilled labourer was paid 7 *dams* or about 3 annas a day. But, "it is certain that there was no golden age of opulence for the common people under the Mughals, because though the prices of articles were cheap, their average income was proportionately low or perhaps lower. They did not, however, grovel in misery and smart under discontent."

Mints, currency and weights. Sher Shah and Akbar attempted to regulate the currency of the State. In addition to the imperial mint at Dehli, there were provincial mints in Bengal, Lahore, Jaunpur, Ahmedabad, Patna and later on at Surat. 'Akbar issued gold, silver and copper coins, the first having no less than twenty-six varieties of different weights and values.' Akbar also issued a square silver rupee called the *jalali*. The chief copper coin during the reign of Sher Shah and Akbar was the *dam*, also called *paisa* or *fulus*. It formed the ready money for both the rich and the poor, high and low, and was divided for the purpose of easy counting into twenty-five parts each called *jital*. Revenue was calculated in *dams*. Business in the empire was transacted in round gold *mohurs*, rupees and *dams*. The coins of the Mughal State, particularly those of Akbar, "were excellent in respect of purity of metal, fulness of weight and artistic execution."

The common units of weight were *seer* and *man* ; but the seers differed in weight under Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Akbar's *man* was equal to $54\frac{1}{2}$ pounds or nearly two-thirds of the present *man* of 40 seers.

Foreign trade. During the greater part of the Mughal rule, India carried on a brisk and considerable foreign trade with different countries of Asia and Europe. There were two principal land-routes on the north-west—one from Lahore to Kabul and the other from Multan to Kandhar. Overseas commerce was also carried on. The chief ports were Lahori Bander in Sind ; Surat, Broach, Cambay in Gujrat ; Bassein, Chaul, Debal in the Ratnagiri district and Goa and Bhatkal in Bombay Presidency ; Calicut and Cochin in Malabar ; Negapatam, Masulipatam and a few minor ones on the east coast and Satagaon, Sripur, Chittagaon and Sonargaon in Bengal. Surat was the emporium of western trade and the gateway to Mecca. It was a cosmopolitan city where the merchants of all countries met and carried on their trade briskly and over a hundred ships of all nationalities were seen at anchor in its port.

The chief imports of the country were bullion, raw-silk, horses, metals, ivory, coral, amber, precious stones, velvets, brocades, broad cloth, perfumes, drugs, Chinese porcelain and her exports included various textiles, pepper, indigo, opium and other drugs and miscellaneous goods. The customs duties, fixed by the State, were not very high and this afforded great encouragement to foreign traders. The significant feature of the Indian trade from the reign of Emperor Akbar was the commercial activity of the English and the Dutch merchants who gradually established their factories or trading stations in widely distributed centres throughout the country.

Economic deterioration. The court revolutions and conspiracies, the incessant wars of Aurangzeb's reign, bankruptcy of the administration and the exhaustion of the Imperial exchequer brought about the disappearance of general peace and political order. A natural sequel to this was the economic deterioration and consequently agriculture, arts and crafts were so badly affected that for some time trade came almost to a standstill. The French traveller Bernier dwells at length

upon the decline of arts, crafts and industries and the unsettled condition of the country. Sir J. N. Sarkar in his book *History of Aurangzeb, Vol. V* rightly observes, "Thus, ensued a great economic impoverishment of India—not only a decrease of the National Stock, but also a rapid lowering of mechanical skill and standard of civilisation, a disappearance of art and culture over wide tracts of the country."

Education[1]

Education, a private concern. The great Mughal Emperors were patrons of learning and promoters of education. Their example was followed by the Mughal nobility and upper classes. Consequently education progressed well under the Mughals. Great 'impetus was given to original research and scholarship and authorship was rewarded with munificent allowances.' But there was nothing like the modern system of education established and maintained by the State in Mughal India. Education was a private concern, a hand-maid of religion among the Mohammedans as well as Hindus. The duty of the State to educate its future citizens was not recognised by the Mughal State and naturally there was no separate department of education. The Padshah or the Mughal Emperor made large grants of land or money to mosques, monasteries and individual saints and scholars renowned for their knowledge. The Emperor recognised it as a religious and not a political duty and the recipients of these royal favours were not bound to maintain schools or colleges with the money. But in actual practice almost every mosque had a *maktab*, a primary school, attached to it, where the boys and girls of the neighbourhood received elementary education. There the Mullah of the mosque also made the children commit the Quran by memory. Elegant penmanship was cultivated and if the boy wished to learn the arts and crafts he was apprenticed to an *Ustad* or master. After leaving the Maktab, the more advanced went to the Madarsah or College where curriculum was mainly religious and the

For more details about Education under the Mughals refer to *Education in Muslim India* by S. M. Jaffar, Chapters V, VI and IX to XIII.

chief subjects taught were theology, mathematics and physics. In some places ethics, accounts, geometry, astronomy, logic, natural philosophy, divinity and history were also taught. Hindu Sanskrit and vernacular schools, in addition to *Maktabs*, continued to function for the benefit of students in the urban as well as rural areas. There were many centres of education like Agra, Lahore, Fatehpur Sikri, Sialkot etc. Agra had several schools and colleges where students flocked from far and wide. Sikri was also studded with several schools and seminaries. The famous Ibadat Khana at Sikri was the meeting place of the intellectuals of various nationalities and the centre of a set of brilliant scholars of the reign of Akbar. The tomb of Humayun was used as a place of instruction. A college was attached to it. Individuals also set up educational institutions such as the college of Maham Angah and Madarsah of Khwaja Mu'in in Delhi, the Madarsah of Maulana Sadruddin in Shahjahanbad and the Madarsahs of Akram-ud-Din, Abdul Hakim and Rafi-ud-Din in the reign of Aurangzeb and the Madarsah of Ghazi-ud-Din in Delhi founded amidst the waning glories of the Mughal empire. Though some monasteries of Mughal India did contain scholars and theologians, they were not as a rule seats of learning like the Vihars of the Buddhist Age or the monasteries of Christian Europe. There were, however, families of hereditary Muslim scholars living in certain towns whose reputation attracted pupils from all parts of the country and who practically maintained high schools and colleges and imparted the highest instruction in their special subjects, for example the Madarsah of Shaikh Wajih-ud-Din in Gujrat, the Madarsah of Firoz Jang at Delhi, the Madarsah of Maulvi Alim-ud-Din and Maulvi Nasim-ud-Din called Fakhr-ul-Murrabbi in Kannauj, etc. The innumerable *Karkhanas* or manufacturing centres provided technical training and vocational knowledge to those who evinced special interest in and aptitude for handicraft. Raja Jai Singh of Amber (Jaipur) encouraged considerably education in science. He is reported to have founded a number of observatories at Jaipur, Ujjain, Mathura, Banaras and Delhi.

Arabic as medium of instruction. Though Arabic had become

a dead language since the 13th century, the highest Muslim education was imparted through this medium during the Mughal period. All books of science, not to speak of theology, were written in the Arabic language and Persian was studied only as an accomplishment in the cultured society, like French in Europe. The most advanced Muslim students of India used to pay visit to Mecca in Arabia and stay there for one year to give the finishing touch to their education. A Mecca degree commanded the highest respect in India and was often considered as the necessary qualification for Kazi-ship. The tutors of the princes were frequently chosen from this class of people.

Female education. Women owing to the purdah system could not attend public institutions, but in nearly every nobleman's establishment a school mistress or governess was kept, and Mughal emperors employed learned Persian women to teach their girls. Akbar is reputed to have established a girls' school in his palace at Fatehpur Sikri. The ladies studied the humanities in preference to theology and Persian rather than Arabic. But all of them who achieved some progress in their studies had to commit the holy Quran to memory. It seems that many Muslim women were patrons of literature and themselves writers. The memoirs of Gulbadan Banu Begum, the talented daughter of Babar, are well-known, and Akbar's foster-mother, Maham Angah, endowed a college at Delhi. Some of the Mughal princesses—Salima Sultana, Akbar's wife, Nur Jahan, Mumtaz Mahal and Jahanara Begum and Zebinda Begum, daughters of Shah Jahan and Zeb-un-Nisa the daughter of Aurangzeb distinguished themselves in literature. Middle class people usually kept their daughters in ignorance except in very rare cases where the fathers acted as teachers at home. Unlike Persia and Arabia, mixed classes of both sexes were not held in India and the girls of the poor were left in absolute illiteracy.

Royal patronage. Mughal emperors were patrons of education. Humayun was very fond of books, and he caused a madarsah to be established at Delhi and changed the pleasure house built by Sher Shah in the *Purana Kila* into a library. He assigned a place to the scholar next but one to the Emperor in dignity. Sher Shah Suri founded the famous Madarsah at

Narnaul in the Patiala District. His son and successor Salim Shah followed his foot-steps in his educational outlook. Akbar's reign marks a new epoch in the progress of education in schools and colleges. He built colleges at Fatehpur Sikri, Agra and other places and introduced some changes in the methods of studies and in the curriculum. He gave to the existing system of education a national bias. Jahangir had promulgated a regulation in his dominion that whenever a well-to-do person or a rich traveller died without any heir, his property would revert to the Crown and it was to be utilised for building and repairing Madarsahs, monasteries, etc. After his accession to the throne, Jahangir repaired even those Madarsahs which for the last thirty years had been the dwelling places of birds and beasts and filled them with students and professors. Shah Jahan encouraged learning by granting rewards and repaired the College called *Dar-ul-Baqa* (Abode of Eternity) which had been almost in ruins. He also founded the famous Imperial college to the south of the Jama Masjid in Delhi and appointed the teachers of the colleges at Delhi and Agra. He made enduring contributions to education. In Dara Shikoh the Mughal Imperial family possessed one of the greatest scholars that India has ever produced. He was a voluminous writer. Though Aurangzeb destroyed Hindu schools and temples, he encouraged the education of the Muslim youths in various ways and founded according to Keene, "numerous colleges and schools." He sanctioned enormous sum of money for the repair and reconstruction of the old maktabs and madarsahs of Gujrat. The successors of Aurangzeb—Bahadur Shah I, Mohammed Shah, Shah Alam II and Bahadur Shah II—were all noted for their literary knowledge and were patrons of education.

Literature

The Mughals were patrons of literature and gave a considerable impetus to its development in different branches. Not only emperors but the ladies of the royal household from Humayun's mother to Zebunnisa, the famous daughter of Aurangzeb, were patrons of art and letters. Babar and Jahangir composed their own memoirs. Many thinkers and scholars flourished and wrote interesting and important works under the

patronage of Akbar. At Akbar's court was gathered a galaxy of poets and men of letters.

The Persian literature. Persian was considerably patronised by the Mughal Emperors and monumental works in Persian were composed under the liberal patronage of the Mughals. The Persian literature of Akbar's period may be considered under three heads—(a) historical works, (b) translations, and (c) poetry and verse. The famous historical works of the period are the *Ta'rikh-i-'Alfi* of Mulla Daud, The *Ain-i-Akbari* and *Akbar-namah* of Abul Fazal, *Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh* by Badauni, the *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* by Nizamuddin Ahmad, the *Munshiat* of Abul Fateh, the *Akbar-namah* by Faizi Sarhindi and the *Ma'asir-i-Rahimi* by Abdul Baqi. The most accomplished and greatest writer in persian was Abul Fazal. He was a poet, essayist, critic and historian. His writings were based on his well-digested erudition and politics of the day. He was famous for translating Hindu Scriptures in persian. By order of Akbar many books in Sanskrit and other languages were translated into Persian to promote free exchange of social and spiritual thoughts between the Hindus and the Muslims. Different sections of the Mahabharat were translated into Persian by many Muslim scholars and were compiled under the title of *Razm-namah.* Badauni completed the translation of the *Ramayan* in 1589, Atharva Veda was translated by Haji Ibrahim Sarhindi, *Lilawati*, a work on Mathematics, by Faizi, treatise on astronomy known as the *Tajak* translated by Mohammed Khan Gujrati, and the *Rajtarangni* (History of Kashmir) by Maulana Shah Mohammed Shahabadi. Some Greek and Arabic works were also translated into Persian. The *Jama-i-Rashidi* was translated from Arabic into Persian by Abdul Qadir Badauni and Khan-i-Khanah Abdur Rahim put into Persian the *Waqiyat-i-Babari* (Memoirs of Babar) from the original Turkish. A number of poets produced works of merit under the liberial patronage of Akbar, the most famous among them were Ghizali, Faizi, Mohammed Hussain Naziri, writer of many *Ghazals* of merit and Sayyid Jamaluddin Urfi, the writer of *Qasidas*. Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanah, the premier noble, was also a scholar and poet of

Persian. Faizi was a poet of distinction but he earned the fame as the translator of Hindu classics into Persian.

Jahangir who had an excellent literary taste also extended royal patronage to scholars. His autobiography is famous for its style, frankness and sincerity of views and freshness of the matter. Among the learned men who had adorned his court, Ghiyas Beg, Naqib Khan, Niamatullah and Abdul Haqq Dehlavi were famous. Some well-known historical works were also written during his reign. Shah Jahan followed the example of his father in patronising men of letters. Besides many writers, poets and theologians, there flourished famous historians like Abdul Hamid Lahori, author of the *Padshah-namah* and Inayat Khan, the writer of *Shah Jahan-namah*. The scholarly works of Prince Dara Shikoh who was keenly interested in religious and philosophical studies were masterpieces of Persian literature. Besides writing a treatise on the technical terms of Hindu pantheism, he wrote a biography of the Muslim saints and he got the Hindu scriptures like the *Gita*, *Upanishads* and the *Yoga Vasistha* translated into Persian. Aurangzeb, though a zealous Sunni, was a critical scholar of Islamic theology and jurisprudence. He himself had mastery over simple and elegant Persian as is exhibited by the collection of his letters called the *Raqqat-i-Alamgiri*. Important histories like Khafi Khan's *Muntakhab-ul-Lubab* Mirza Mohammed Kazim's *Alamgir-namah*, Mohammed Saqi's *Masir-i-Alamgiri*, Sujan Rai Khatri's *Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh*, Bhimsen's *Nuskha-i-Dilkusha* and *Fatuhat-i-Alamgiri* by Iswar Das were compiled during the reign of Aurangzeb.

Libraries. The Mughal Emperors' fondness for books led to the foundation of the Imperial Library which became a treasure house of every kind of literature. Important works, written by ancient authors of repute, dealing with history, philosophy, science and religion, were collected and placed in the Imperial Library. Humayun himself collected a vast number of books for this library and brought with him his favourite books from Persia. In Akbar's reign it consisted of 24,000 manuscript volumes many of which were specially copied out and illustrated for the emperor. Faizi was the librarian. Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan were great collectors of books and Hindu as well as

Muslim nobles followed the fashion of the imperial court. The great private manuscript libraries of northern India have their origin at this time—the Anup Sanskrit Library of Bikaner, the Pothi Khana of Jaipur and the great collections of Jaisalmer are the examples of such medieval libraries.

The Vernacular Literatures. The peace, law and order secured by the Emperor Akbar, the noble cosmopolitan idea of the religious movements of the age and the preachings of the saintly teachers in the common languages inspired the genius of the scholars that unfolded in manifold petals. As a result of this the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries witnessed the fruition of the knowledge and talents of the Hindus. These two centuries are also called "the Augustan Age of Hindustani literature."

Hindi. The first famous writer after 1526 was Malik Mohammed Jayasi, the author of the famous philosophic epic called the *Padmavat.* Akbar's keen interest in and patronage of Hindi poetry and peaceful and settled condition of the country during his reign gave a great encouragement to Hindi literature. Dr. Iswari Prasad in his book *History of Muslim Rule in India* remarks that the brilliant conquests and administrative reforms of Akbar inaugurated a new era ; and the latter half of the sixteenth century became an age of exuberant imagination, gorgeous display and romance—an age of heroic deeds and gallant adventure which called forth the best powers of man. Poets, thinkers, writers and scholars shed lustre on the vernacular literatures. Among Akbar's courtiers, Raja Birbal, Raja Man Singh, Raja Bhagwan Das and Prithviraj Rathor were famous poets. Raja Todarmal also wrote verses in Hindi. But the most distinguished poet and writer among his courtiers was Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanah. His *dohas* in Hindi are even today read with keen interest and great admiration and enthusiasm. His book *Rahim Satsai* has its own place in Hindi literature. Narhari, Karan Harinath and Gang were also well-known writers and poets of the court of Akbar.

The greater part of the Hindi literature of the Mughal period was religious, characterised by an exposition of either Krishna worship or the Rama cult. Most of the poetry of the time

borrowed its themes from the cults of Krishna and Rama. Many poets and writers of the Krishna cult flourished in the Braj-bhumi, corresponding approximately to the Jamuna Valley. The notable among them are grouped under the name of "*Asta-chhap*", the most renowned among whom was poet Surdas. He, writing in *Brajbhasha*, described in his *Sursagar* 'the sports of Krishna's early life and composed many verses on the charm of Krishna and his beloved Radha.' The verses of Sur are a part of the most valuable treasure of the Hindi literature. They are famous for their sweet melody and wonderful imagery. Other poets of the *Astachhap* group were Nandadas, Krishnadas, Parmanand, Kumhandas and Chaturbhujdas. Raskhan, a renowned poet of the Krishna cult, composed sweet verses, full of *bhakti* or intense devotion to Lord Krishna. *Premvatika* is one of his famous works. Among the poets and writers of the Rama cult, the most notable was Tulsidas. He wrote in the language of the people and may well claim to be the poet of India. He was not merely a poet of very high order, but a spiritual teacher of the people whose name has become a household word and his memory is worshipped by millions even today. His notable works were *Ramgitawali*, *Krishnagitawali*, *Vinay Patrika*, *Parwati-mangal*, *Janki-mangal*, *Dohawali* and *Vairagya Sandipani*. But the most famous of his works is *Ramacharitmanas* which is not only an extraordinary and magnificent epic of great poetic genius, singing the great noble deeds of king Rama, but a scripture of the people to which the entire Hindi-knowing people of India turn for spiritual sustenance. It has been 'a code of ethics constantly on the lips of all from princes to peasants'. In fact, the book has become "the one Bible of a hundred millions of people." (Grierson) "*Ramayan* as a creation in the Hindi literature and as an expression of religion stands supreme." (Kissan Keane) The historical and cultural significance of Tulsidas is unique. Sardar Panikkar remarks that Tulsidas saved Hinduism from schism and cults ; for the religion of the *Ramcharitmanas*, inspite of the exaltation of Rama as the supreme being, was catholic enough to hold all sects and provided the strong motive force of *Bhakti* which has since then remained the basic factor of Indian popular religion.

It was in the Mughal period that the first attempts were made to systematise the art of poetry in the field of Hindi literature by famous poets like Keshava Das, Senapati and the Tripathi brothers who flourished during the reign of Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb. Keshva wrote on the art of writing poetry. His famous works are *Kavi Priya*, *Ramchandrika* (life-story of Ram), *Alankar Manjari* dealing with prosody and *Rasik Priya* describing the art of poetical composition. Keshava occupies front rank among the Hindi poets. People even today read his works with keen interest. Among the Tripathi brothers, Bhushan sang the glory and greatness of his own community—Hindu—and was patronised by Shivaji and Chhattrasal Bundela. The famous works of Bhushan are *Shivabawani*, *Chhatrasal Shatak* and *Shivraj Bhushan*. Another well-known poet was Sundar who composed his famous work *Sundar Srangar* on poetical composition. Shah Jahan, being impressed by his poetic genius, conferred on him the titles of *Kavi Ray* and *Mahakavi Ray*. Deva kavi of Etawah and Biharilal Chaube, author of the well-known *Bihari Satsai*, a collection of 700 *dohas* and *sorathas*, also deserve special mention here.

Bengali. The period under review is also noted for a brilliant outburst of the Vaishnava literature in Bengal. Its many branches like *Karchas* (notes), the *padas* and songs and biographies of Chaitanya "have not only saturated the minds of the people of Bengal with feelings of love and liberalism but have also survived as a mirror of the social life of the province during that age." (*Advanced History of India*, p. 582) Krishnadas Kaviraj, Brindavan Das, Jayanand, Trilochandas and Narhari Chakravarty have written monumental biographies of Bengal's greatest saint Chaitanya. This period also witnessed the production of many translations of the Great Sanskrit epics and the *Bhagwat*, and books in praise of Chandi Devi and Mansa Devi. Among the poets of Bengal Kashiram Das, Mukandram Chakravarti and Danaram deserve special mention. Mukandram Chakravarti has gained great popularity and Cowell calls him 'the Crabbe of Bengal'. The works of Bharatchandra and Ram Prasad were written after the decline of the Mughals. Besides these, numerous Hindu and Muslim poets had enriched the Bengali literature with their works.

Marathi. Marathi literature was equally enriched during this period by Eknath, Dasopant, Mukteshwar, Vaman Pandit, Tukarnm, Ramdas and Moropant. The Marathi works of the age indicate scholarship of the writers and the poets. In the beginning of the age Shridhar Swami borrowed themes from the Ramayan and the Mahabharat and composed his works, the most famous among them being *Hari Vijaya*, *Ram Vijaya*, *Pandawa Pratap* and *Shivalilamrita*. Mukteshwar followed his foot-steps and composed his famous *Ramayan*. Among other poets of the age Raghunath Pandit, the author of *Nal Damayanti Swayambarakhyan*, Madhwamunishwar, Amritray and Mahipati deserve mention. Ramdas a famous saint and poet of Maharashtra is also the product of this age. His renowned work is *Dasbodh*. Vaman Pandit is the most celebrated among the poets of the Krishna cult in Maharashtra. He is noted for his *yamak alamkar* and new style of verses. Moropant is the most renowned among the poets of the Rama cult. His work *Kekawali* breathes the spirit of intense devotion. He has composed the whole of the *Mahabharat* in *Arya* metre. Like Tulsidas and Surdas Tukaram flourished in Maharashtra in this period. He was a celebrated vaishnava saint whose *abhangas* are recited even today. With the rise of the Maratha power after the death of Aurangzeb, Marathi literature characterised by a new epoch of *Pauwadas* or ballads. The poets of the age excelled in composing *Lawani* and *Pauwadas* to inspire the Maratha soldiers. Ramjoshi, Anantfandi, Honaji Bal, Sagan, Bhau, Prabhakar, Parashram etc. are the noted poets and writers of the *Pauwada* age.

Gujrati Like Hindi and Marathi Gujrati literature was also enriched during the Mughal period. Arwa, the famous saint and poet of Gujrat, flourished in the reign of Akbar. He abandoned the traditions of the Krishna cult and expounded philosophy and love, critically examined the human nature and exposed the materialistic outlook of life in his works. He is therefore renowned as the representative poet of the age. *Chitt-Vichar-Samvad*, *Shat-pad*, *Kewalyagita*, etc. are his famous works. He was followed by poet Bhatt Premanand. Credit goes to him for raising Gujrati to the high level of literary excellence. He

is supposed to be the author of thirty-six works. Another celebrated Gujrati poet Samal Bhatt flourished after the death of Aurangzeb. He had succeeded most effectively in describing Puranic legends and stories in verses. The story of his work *Madan-Mohna* and *Samal Ratnamal* are very popular even today. Arwa, Premanand and Samal are the three shining stars of the firmament of Gujrati literature. They had not only influenced the writers and poets of their own age, but even those of the succeeding generations. Though a few Vaishnava and Jain poets flourished in the seventeenth century in Gujrat, but after the death of Aurangzeb Gujrati literature lacked talented poets and writers and no work of outstanding merit was composed in the eighteenth century. However, it witnessed the growth of the *Garbha* literature—long poems written in praise of goddess Amba or Kali, sung by women and girls while dancing gracefully, moving in circle beating time with rhythmic clapping of the hands.

Urdu. Urdu did not progress considerably under the Mughals. However, Faizi's friend Nuri Azampuri, Hazrat Kamaluddin Makhadum, Shaikh Sadi and Mohammed Afzal were the Urdu poets of Akbar's period, whereas Nasir Afzali Allahabadi and Pandit Chandrabhan are considered celebrated Urdu poets of Shah Jahan's reign. But the real progress of Urdu took place in the Deccan under the patronage of the Sultans of Golkunda and Bijapur who themselves were poets of remarkable ability and distinction. Mohammed Kuli Kutub Shah (1519-1555), the Sultan of Golkunda, was himself a great poet and writer of Urdu. Two poets Ibra Nisati and 'Gawasi' flourished after him. Under the royal patronage of the Sultans of Bijapur Mohammed Nasrat Shah, the author of *Alinamah* and *Gulshana-i-Ishk* and *Shah Hashim.* The writer of *Yusuf wa Zulekha Masnavi* flourished in the Deccan. But Wali of Aurangabad (1668-1744) who wrote *ghazals* (love songs), *masnavis* (narrative poems), *rubaiyats* (quatrains) in simple, natural and elegant style was the most renowned poet of the age. Urdu poetry received a definite standard of form at the hands of Wali, called the father of Rekhta. Credit goes to him for introducing Urdu poetry in northern India. His *Diwan* became

very popular in the Mughal court. Many poets composed the works in imitation of Wali's works. Among them Hatim, Khan Arju, Abru and Mazhar are most famous and they are known as the fathers of the Urdu poetry in the North. Delhi became the centre of Urdu literature in the beginning of the eighteenth century. After the death of Aurangzeb Urdu progressed considerably and poets like Ghalib, Shah, Nasir, Momin etc. had enriched the Urdu literature.

Sanskrit. The Mughal period is marked by the last efflorescence of Sanskrit literature. Though Akbar's court was adorned with Sanskrit writers, the greatest poet and writer of Sanskrit was Jagannath Pandit. He was honoured by Emperor Shah Jahan with the title of *Kaviraj*. 'Jagannath was the last of the great Sanskrit poets whose works attain a classic beauty in diction and sentiment.' His *Ganga Lahiri* and other works have gained great fame and are rightly regarded as classics. There flourished another poet called Kavindra. Though his laboured and ornate literary compositions are 'in no way on a par with Jagannath's,' yet they deserve mention. Rupa Goswami, the writer of the drama *Vidagdha Madhava* and other works, the dramatist Giridharnatha and several others are among the famous poets of Sanskrit during this age. In addition to men, Vaijyanti, who successfully collaborated with her beloved Krishnanatha, in composing the famous work *Anandalatika Champu*, and Vallabhadevi, the well-known author of *Subhashitavali* were reputed learned women of the period.

By the end of Aurangzeb's reign, the era of great poets was closed and the disintegration and dissolution of the Mughal Empire had a disastrous effect on the vernacular literature of the country.

Religious currents during the Mughal period. The sixteenth century, like the fifteenth, was characterised by great religious upheaval, when Vaisnavism appealed successfully to the hearts of millions of people in northern India and Bengal. Tens of thousands began to follow Rama and Krishna cults. The devotees of Rama and Krishna separated themselves into many sects and inculcated worship according to their own ideas. The cult of Krishna was preached by a group of devotees and saints

significantly called *Astachhap* (eight seals) among whom Surdas was the most renowned. They sang *bhajans* and wrote and preached in *Brajbhasha* and dwelt with great love, fervour and devotion upon the sports of Krishna's childhood. A person named Hari Vamsa founded the Radha Ballabhi sect about 1551 A. D. The followers of this sect worship Radha, the consort of Krishna and seek to gain the favour of Krishna through her. Other famous Vaishnava saints of the period in Brindaban were Rupa, Sanatan and Jiva Goswami who founded the temple of Radha Damodar and Gopal Bhatt.

The Rama cult was preached by Tulsidas who advocated the worship of Rama as an incarnation of god Vishnu. He accepted the principles and practices of orthodox Hinduism, upheld the caste-system, emphasised Brahmanical superiority, advocated idolatry, laid stress upon rituals, discouraged the freedom of women, and preached the doctrine of *bhakti*. He did not found a sect, but he acted as a distinguished reformer and teacher. Besides Tulsidas there were many other reformers who founded their own sects. Their teachings and writings reveal the impress of Muslim influence. Dadu (1544-1603), a saint and reformer, who denounced idolatry and caste, rejected Hindu ritualism, emphasised the simple faith in God and founded a sect known as *Dadupanth*. The sect of the *Khakis* founded by Kilh arose from among a group of the followers of Dadu. Birbhan, a contemporary of Dadu, founded the famous sect of *Sadhs* or *Satnamis*. The followers of this sect deprecated caste-system, adored one God under the name of *Satnam*, denounced idol-worship, maintained a very high standard of morals, disfavoured hoarding of wealth and its inequalities and aimed at the absorption in God. They rose in prominence during the reign of Aurangzeb. Haridas founded a sect called the *Narayanian*. It confines to the veneration of *Narayan* or the Supreme Being. About the middle of the seventeenth century *Laldasi* sect was founded by Laldas whose teachings ran on the same lines as those of Kabir. The *Laldasis* emphasised the importance of Ramnama and sang hymns accompanied with music. *Satnamis* and *Dharamdasis* pointed out the value of repeating the name of God and the duty of leading clean,

virtuous and pure lives. Dharnidas, Pran Nath, Budha Sahib, Charandas and Ramcharan were other famous saints who flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Ramcharan founded the *Ram Sanehi* order, Swami Narayan Singh the *Shivanarayani* order and Sahajananda the *Swami Narayani* sect in the eighteenth century.

In Bengal, the followers of Chaitanya preached the *bhakti* cult. They held that there could be no moksha or deliverance without *bhakti*. According to them, Krishna is the *Paramatma*, the Supreme Soul and the Supreme Object of worship.

In the Deccan great religious moments also arose in the sixteenth century. Saint Eknath was one of its pioneers in Maharashtra. He emphasised *Bhakti* to God by means of which, according to him, women, untouchables or Sudras and all others could achieve salvation. Another leading saint of Maharashtra was Tuka Ram. He enjoined worship with a clean, pure and lofty heart and exhorted people to be kind to all. Tuka Ram's *abhangas* or unbroken hymns are very popular. Their piety elevates the soul and purifies the emotions. They are still recited in Maharashtra and console millions of people in suffering and sorrow. Ramdas was another saint who had profound influence on the lives of the people of Maharashtra. He was the spiritual guide of Shivaji. He preached Rama cult. According to him salvation is attained by devotion to Rama alone. He emphasised that purity in thought and action, unselfishness, truthfulness, forgiveness, sincerity, mercy, humility, charity and generosity are the most certain pass-ports to Divine bliss. Many of the above-mentioned saints came from lower classes. They carried further the great wave of the protestant movements in Hinduism which had arisen with Ramanand and Kabir in the fifteenth century and which spread with wonderful rapidity all over India in the succeeding three centuries. All of these saints were devotees, inspired by the same ideas. Their philosophy was a protest against orthodox Hinduism. But the later saints 'hardly added anything new to the religiousness or anything of great value to the rich treasures of devotional poetry.'

Besides the Hindu saints there were many sufis in the

Muslim society. During the Mughal period they advocated intense love and deep devotion to God. They preached that the practical aim of life is to love God and get absorbed in Him. They emphasised complete union with the Divinity and pointed special methods for the spiritual progress. They explained the needs of a spiritual guide or preceptor and laid emphasis on repentance, abstinence, renunciation, quiet piety, contemplation, humility and purity of soul for salvation. They preached their doctrines to the followers of all faiths and persuaded none to give up his creed. Preaching of sufi saints encouraged the growth of religious toleration, harmony and brotherly feeling among the followers of different creeds. Shah Jahan's eldest son, prince Dara Shikoh, was a sufi.

Fine Arts. The Mughal age was not only a period of experiment and innovation but of a continuation and culmination of those processes of fine arts that had their seeds sown in the later part of the Turko-Afghan rule. The spirit of harmony and synthesis that commenced in the closing years of the Delhi Sultanate continued in the Mughal period even in realm of fine arts. The beneficent royal patronage affected markedly the quality of arts produced by the people. The culture of the Mughal period was the court culture. It was inspired throughout the age by the throne. The masses had no hand in it. The Mughal culture depended almost entirely on the imperial patronage. When the keen and personal interest of the Mughal Emperor stimulated it, it attained the greatest heights ; but it languished and faded away when the ruler's interest declined. Consequently under the first five Mughal rulers fine arts rose to high standard of excellence, but they touched their lowest ebb when the court patronage was discontinued. The Mughal Emperors being lovers of fine arts had evolved new styles and techniques which indicate a happy mingling of Persian and Indian ,elements. This synthesis has left a deep impress on painting, architecture, embroidery, jewellery and metal work of the age. All the fine arts of the period breathe a spirit of luxury. The following factors were responsible for this extraordinary development of fine arts and high standard of production.

1. 'The wealth of India dazzled even eyes accustomed to

the pomp of Versailles.' Immense wealth and the unlimited power of the empire enabled the Mughals to continue their ardent, sustained and perceptive patronage and construct numerous buildings.

2. The relatively settled conditions and a long period of peace that prevailed all over the northern India smoothed the path for undertaking extensive works of art.

3. The Mughal Emperors had pronounced aesthetic nature. Each of them was anxious to find expression in some visual arts. The first five rulers were in most respects intellectually superior to those around them. In their cultural outlook and refined taste they had few equals.

4. A strong and wise government, a glorious and rich heritage of culture and sympathetic sovereigns created unique atmosphere for the brilliant output of letters and fine arts.

Architecture[1]

With the exception of Emperor Aurangzeb, whose puritan ideas prevented him from patronising fine arts, all the early Mughal Emperors were great builders. In fact, with the advent of the Mughals, Indian architecture enters upon a new phase in which the rugged austerity and simplicity of the work of the earlier Sultans of Delhi is softened and beautified by Persian influence. Architecture under the Mughals attained its most sumptuous form. The unexampled wealth and splendour and great luxury of the Mughals enabled them to construct buildings of supreme beauty, lay out extensive pleasure gardens and new cities. The Mughal architecture reveals a happy blending of Persian and Indian styles. The Mughal buildings, unlike those of the Sultanate period, indicate no manifestation of provincial or regional styles. They display uniformity in their architectural character and structural principles. The chief characteristics of the Mughal buildings are the bulbous

[1] Refer to *Indian Architecture* (*Islamic Period*) by Percy Brown, Chapters XVII to XXI; *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. IV, Chapter XVIII; *A History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon* by V. A. Smith, Chapter XII; *Glimpses of Mughal Architecture* by A. Goswami ; *Indian Architecture* by E. B. Havell.

graceful dome, the cupolas at the corners standing on slender pillars, magnificent palace hall and the lofty vaulted gateway. The Mughals introduced the style of constructing mausoleums in the centre of a large parklike enclosure, and the innovation of constructing a double dome, the outer and inner one, the latter formed the vaulted ceiling of the mortuary chamber underneath.

There are certain historians like Fergusson who believe that the Mughal style of architecture was foreign in origin. This theory of Fergusson has been criticised by E. B. Havell who maintains that Indian culture had a remarkable power of absorbing foreign elements of art. He points out that the art and culture of foreign countries with which India had established relations had their impress upon the Indian art, but it cannot be asserted that the inspiration of the Indian master craftsmen was entirely foreign. Under the Mughals there was good deal of fusion of culture and art. According to Sir John Marshall, in a country so extensive and diversified like India, it cannot be definitely said that architecture ever conformed to a single universal style. The personal tastes of the Mughal emperors moulded the types considerably. Much depended upon them. The Mughals provided the elements of grandeur and originality to the grace and decoration of Hindu architecture. After the death of Babar, Humayun's liking for Persian style led to the Persian influence on Indian art and it increased and continued to the end of Akbar's period. But Akbar's genius adopted Persian ideals to the traditions of Indian craftsmanship. During the reign of Akbar's successors, Indian architecture and painting assumed Indian character and in the exquisite and magnificent structures of their periods there is nothing which can be pronounced as distinctly Persian. Dr. Iswari Prasad rightly points out that "the Mughal-style, which was an amalgamation of many influences, was more sumptuous and decorative than the style that preceded it, and its delicacy and ornamentation furnish a striking contrast to the massiveness and simplicity of the art of pre-Mughal days.' In design, in the use of building materials, in execution, in delicacy and grace, decoration and carving the structures of the Mughals were radically different

from those constructed by the Sultans of Delhi and they had more of the Hindu and Persian elements than the buildings of the pre-Mughal days.

Architecture before Akbar. Babar, being a prejudiced critic of the Indian architecture, was not satisfied with the structures that he found at Delhi and Agra. Consequently it is said that he invited architects from Constantinople and other centres of Islamic culture to construct his buildings. As no traces of the influence of the Bijzantine style are observable in the Mughal buildings it is very unlikely that the foreign architects, especially the pupils of the famous Albanian architect Sinan, had worked on mosques and other monuments in India. However, Babar constructed buildings and employed 680 masons daily in Agra alone and 1941 persons daily on his palaces and other buildings in Ara, Sikri, Biana, Dholpur, Gwalior and Kiul. Though most of the buildings of Babar have perished, but three mosques attributed to him have survived this day. Two of them are the large mosques in Kabul Bagh at Panipat and the Jami Masjid at Sambhal in Rohilkhand and the third mosque within the old Lodhi fort at Agra. Humayun, the son and successor of Babar, on account of his anxiety and trouble, did not find enough time to indulge in his artistic fancy. However, two mosques remain of those built during the reign of Humayun. One is in a ruinous condition at Agra and the other at Fatehabad in the Hissar district of the Punjab. The latter has enamelled tile decoration in the Persian manner. Percy Brown points out that Babar and Humayun both had indirectly influenced the subsequent art. "Babar's marked aesthetic sense, communicated to his successors, inspired them under more favourable conditions to the production of their finest achievement, while Humayun's forced contact with the culture of the Safavids is reflected in that Persian influence noticeable in many of the Mughal buildings which followed."

Sher Shah who snatched power from the feeble hands of Humayun was also a great builder. His successor followed his examples. They erected mighty forts in the Punjab, Rohtas and Mankot and constructed at Sahasram in Bihar and in its neighbourhood a series of tombs. Some of them are the finest

specimens of the medieval architecture. The Sur period is the age of transition in the history of Indian architecture. It was in this age that the art was beginning to shake off that puritanicle influence which had fettered it since the time of Firoz Shah Tughlak and was endeavouring to become more ornate in style. Decorating edifice with rich carving was being gradually adopted and it reached its perfection under Shah Jahan. Sher Shah began to build a new walled-capital at Delhi on the site of Indraprasth but it could not be completed due to his premature death. However, the two remaining gateways of this capital and the citadel, now significantly called the *Purana Qila*, display "a more refined and artistically ornate type of edifice than had prevailed for some time."

The mosque in the *Purana Qila* near Delhi known as the Qila-i-Kuhna depicts in a most decisive manner the progress that took place in architecture during this age. It occupies a high rank among the Muslim buildings of Northern India. It "reflects Persian influence in its recessed portal, small minarets round the dome and in its fine masonary, though in other respects it is Indian." The Mausoleum of Sher Shah, which stands foursquare on a high plinth in the centre of a great artificial lake at Sahasram in Bihar, is an immense pyramidal structure of five distinct storeys. On account of its design, dignity and grandeur it is called a marvel of Indo-Muslim architecture. Percy Brown remarks that it is 'a creation of sober and massive splendour of which any country would be proud.' The whole structure exhibits 'the aesthetic capacity of the Indian architect at its greatest, and his genius at its highest.' Besides this, it also displays a happy blending of Hindu and Muslim architectural ideas. Thus in art the Afghan ruler Sher Shah paved the path for the great Mughal Emperor Akbar.

Architecture under Akbar. Mughal architecture, as we know it for all practical purposes, begins with Akbar. He had insatiable passion for building. Abul Fazal rightly observes, "His Majesty plans splendid edifices, and dresses the work of his mind and heart in the garment of stone and clay." Akbar's reign saw a remarkable development of architecture. He mastered every detail of art and with a liberal and synthetic mind he

borrowed his artistic ideas from a variety of sources. The expert craftsmen of his reign gave a practical shape to his ideas. The main elements of the style of architecture that evolved under Akbar were the use of red sand-stone with insertion of white marble, carved or boldly inlaid patterns and painted designs on the interior walls and ceilings for the ornamentation. The Persian and Hindu influences had their full play in the Akbari style of architecture. While still retaining the Persian ideas which he inherited from his Persian mother, his policy of tolerating the Hindus, sympathising with their religion and culture and his attempts to win them over to his side made him adopt the elements of Hindu architecture in his buildings whose decorative features were copies of those seen in the temples of the Jains and Hindus. The Hindu style is remarkably illustrated 'in the Jahangiri Mahal in the Agra fort with its square pillars and bracket-capitals and rows of small arches,' in numerous structures at Fatehpur Sikri, the imperial capital, and in the Lahore fort. Even the ground plan of Humayun's tomb at old Delhi and the free use of white marble in its external appearance are Hindu elements.

Akbar constructed several forts, villas, towers, palaces, mosques, *sarais*, schools, tanks, wells and gateways. Humayun's tomb is the earliest and note-worthy structure of Akbar's reign. The mausoleum stands on the broad platform formed by the upper surface of a high and wide-spread terrace. Two architectural features distinguish this tomb from buildings previously constructed, (i) the shape, design and construction of its dome are according to Persian style ; (ii) the whole building is placed in the centre of a large park-like enclosure. Thus Humayun's tomb introducd new elements in the Indian architecture. Other characteristic works of Akbar were the Agra and Lahore forts and fortress-palaces. He enlarged the Agra Fort, a vast structure of red sand-stone with walls seventy feet high and lofty gateways and broad octagonal towers. This was 'the first conception of red sand-stone on such a large scale.' The two imposing and impressive gateways of the Agra Fort display in originality and spontaneity and rich and varied ornamentation giving a most attractive appearance. The Agra Fort indicates that the

Rajput citadels must have exercised considerable influence on the fort architecture. The Jahangiri Mahal in Agra Fort, intended as a residence for the heir-apparent and his family, has fine ornate handi work. The palace in the fortress of Lahore had the remarkable display of tile decoration distributed over its exterior walls. The fortress palace of forty pillars at Allahabad is the largest of those of its kind built by Akbar, as its widest dimension is nearly 3,000 feet across. It is of definitely Hindu design, 'with its projecting verandah roof supported on rows of Hindu pillars.'

But the most ambitious architectural project and notable building achievement of Akbar's reign is the new capital city of Fatehpur Sikri and its buildings-Fergusson remarked that Fatehpur Sikri was the reflex of the mind of a great man (Akbar). His most important buildings are his palaces at Fatehpur Sikri which exhibit every characteristic of a completely matured style. The most magnificent buildings at Sikri are Jodha Bai's palace, the residential palaces of Mariam and the Sultana, the house of Birbal, the *Sonhala Makan* or the house of the Princess of Amber, the *Diwan-i-Am* or the Emperor's office of Hindu design, the *Diwan-i-Khas* or the Hall of Private Audience the *Panch Mahal* or palace of five storeys, the Jami Masjid, the Buland Darwaza and the Tomb of Salim Chisti. There are numerous other supplementary structures all having much the same architectural character. Jodha Bai's palace is the most complete in its design and arrangements and its carved decoration resembles to the Hindu temple architecture. The interior of the palace of Mariam was ornamented with large mural paintings apparently of Persian subjects. The palace of the Turkish Sultana, a single storeyed pavilion, is noted for its simplicity of designs and richness and high quality of its carved decoration. The house of Birbal attracts the eye due to the architectural ornamentation and the exuberance of its carved decoration, both inside and outside. The Diwan-i-Khas which has unique arrangements for the imperial seat has distinctly Indian character in planning and construction. The *Panch Mahal*, a pyramidal structure in five storeys, each carved in a wholly different design, exhibits continuation of the plan of the Indian

Buddhist *Vihars* which probably survived in the age. All these are secular buildings. But the most impressive part of Fatehpur Sikri is the group of structures of religious nature in which the Jami Masjid predominates. The highest architectural skill was concentrated on the Jami Masjid. Inlaid marble and plaster relief in colour were freely used in this mosque. The tomb of Salim Chisti, a gem of craftsmanship, and the Buland Darwaza are near the mosque. The Buland Darwaza, rising to a total height of 176 feet above the road way with the frontage of 130 feet is a superb structure, equalled by no other gate-way in India. It has almost indescribable dignity and impressiveness. It was erected to commemorate Emperor Akbar's conquest of Gujrat and has been described as the most perfect architectural achievement in the whole of India. "Each art culture has usually one form of utterance in which it finds the readiest means of expression and with the Mughals it was the entrance gateway."

Architecture under Jahangir. The strenuous and unceasing building activity of Akbar was followed by a period of partial inertia. As Jahangir, Akbar's son and successor, had greater love for painting than architecture, the number of buildings constructed by him was poor as compared with the architectural records of his father Akbar. The rule of Jahangir was relatively uneventful in the realm of architecture. But three structures of his reign are of great interest and merit. First is the mausoleum of Akbar at Sikandra near Agra, the construction of which was begun by Emperor Akbar himself but completed by Jahangir. The design of this colossal mausoleum was inspired by the Buddhist vihars of India. It has five square terraces which emerge from the ground rising one above the other, but diminishing as they ascend upwards. The uppermost storey of white marble has a vaulted roof. Originally a central marble dome with a golden ceiling was intended to crown the top-most storey. Had this been achieved, the tomb of the greatest Muslim Emperor of India would have been included among the greatest mausoleums of the world, second only to the Tajmahal. The second notable structure of Jahangir's reign is the mausoleum of Itimad-ud-Daulah, Nurjahan's father, built at Agra by the Empress Nurjahan herself. Though it is a com-

paratively small structure, it is wholly constructed of pure white marble with *pietra-dura*, that is inlaying of precious stones of various different colours in a most delicate manner, and, therefore 'it conveys the impression of a rich article of jewellery magnified into architecture.' This was a Rajput-style of architecture or most probably an older style of India. This building is noted not only for its rare craftsmanship, 'refined feminism', high aesthetic taste, refinement of architecture, delicacy of treatment and chaste quality of its decoration, but it marks a turning point in the evolution of architecture under the Mughals. Till now the Mughal buildings were constructed of red sand-stone with *opus sectile* ornamentation. But Itimad-ud-Daulah's tomb is the first Mughal structure constructed of entirely white marble with inlaid decoration called *pietra-dura*. It thus introduces the age of the sumptuous white marble pavilions and *pietra-dura* of the Emperor Shah Jahan. The third important building of the period is Jahangir's tomb on the opposite bank of the Ravi at Shahdra near Lahore, built by Nurjahan. It lacks the lofty effect of the earlier tombs.

Architecture under Shah Jahan. The most magnificent and prolific builder among the Mughals was Emperor Shah Jahan. Numerous buildings, palaces, forts, gardens, mosques and subsidiary structures erected by him are still existing at Agra, Delhi, Lahore, Ajmer, Ahmedabad, Kashmir, Kabul, Kandhar and elsewhere. The architectural structures of Emperor Shah Jahan, as compared with those of great Akbar, are inferior in splendour, massivity and originality of conception, but they are superior in soft grace, elegance, highly artistic nature and lavish display and rich ornamentation of subtle nature. Consequently Shah Jahan's architecture 'becomes jewellery on a bigger scale.' Shah Jahan's building art gained exceptional elegance. The robust and exuberant style of Akbar gave way to elegant and effeminate style under Shah Jahan. In fact, Mughal architecture reached its climax under him. It was carried to the highest degree of perfection.

Shah Jahan's architecture is noted for certain characteristics. Not only change in the building material but change in the technique and in the architectural elements of style were also

introduced in this age. Now marble was substituted for red stone. Shah Jahan 'found the Mughal cities of sandstone and he left them of marble.' It was an age of pure white marble. Technique was also changed. Coloured tiles were rarely used. Rich decoration was obtained by means of inlaid patterns in coloured stones. 'The chisel of the stone carver was replaced by the finer instruments of the marble cutter and polisher.' As regards the style instead of rectangular character of the structures of the previous age, there arose the curved lines and flowing rhythm of the style under Shah Jahan. Ornamental elements of a curvilinear order and marble arcades of engrailed arches became the distinguishing characteristics of the style. Spacious grandeur of design was successfully combined with faminine grace. Then, the Hindu influence, so strong under Akbar, entirely disappeared in Shah Jahan's buildings.

Shah Jahan constructed buildings of the most sensuous and voluptuous order. He largely reconstructed the fortress palaces at Agra and Delhi and laid out the famous city of Shahjahanabad with a palace fortress known as the Fort of Delhi on the right bank of the Jamuna. But the main buildings of Shah Jahan's time are the *Rang Mahal*, the Diwan-i-Am and Diwan-i-Khas in the Fort of Delhi, the Jami Masjid, the Moti Masjid, the Taj Mahal and a number of minor buildings in various parts of the empire. The *Rang Mahal* is lavishly ornate and is regarded as the crowning jewel of Shah Jahan's seraglio. But the Diwan-i-Khas, which is more highly ornamented than any building of Shah Jahan, rivals the *Rang Mahal* in an appearance of exuberant grace. It was in this marble pavilion that the great Mughal, Shah Jahan, sitting on his peacock throne, gave audience in private to princes of the royal blood, nobles, foreign ambassadors and distinguished visitors. With its costly silver ceiling, pavement of polished marble and mingled decoration of gold, precious stones and marble it justified the Persian inscription engraved on its walls :—

> "*Agar firdaus bar ru-yi Zamin ast,*
> *Hamin ast, hamin ast, u hamin ast.*"
> (If on earth be an Eden of bliss,
> It is this, it is this, none but this.)

The Diwan-i-Am or Hall of Public Audience was not a pleasure resort but a place for the transaction of administrative and official business. On ceremonial occasions the peacock-throne was placed in the alcove in the back wall of this Hall for Shah Jahan to sit there. The Jami Masjid near the Delhi Fort, intended as centre of public worship, is very impressive, dignified and pleasing. On account of its majesty and dimensions it ranks as the largest and most eminent building of its kind in the country. Though it is nobly proportioned structure, it does not set the emotional chords sounding as do other buildings of this period. The Moti Masjid at Agra, constructed by Shah Jahan in honour of his daughter Jahanara Begum, represents the architectural zenith of Shah Jahan's time from the standpoint of true art. Though it does possess nothing like the imposing aspect of the Jami Masjid of Delhi, yet it has purity and simplicity, well-balanced perfect proportions, and the harmony of constructive designs. Consequently it is an interesting architectural production and is considered as one of the most elegant buildings of its class to be found anywhere. Some magnificent buildings were constructed in Lahore during the reign of Shah Jahan. Their chief characteritic was the brilliant exterior decoration on surfaces executed with patterns in brilliantly coloured glazed tiles. The finest example of this phase of Mughal architecture is the Wazir Khan's mosque in Lahore and tombs of Ali Mardan Khan and of Sharafunissa. Another beautiful specimen of Mughal architecture in Lahore is the mausoleum of Jahangir built by Shah Jahan and Nurjahan at Shahdara.

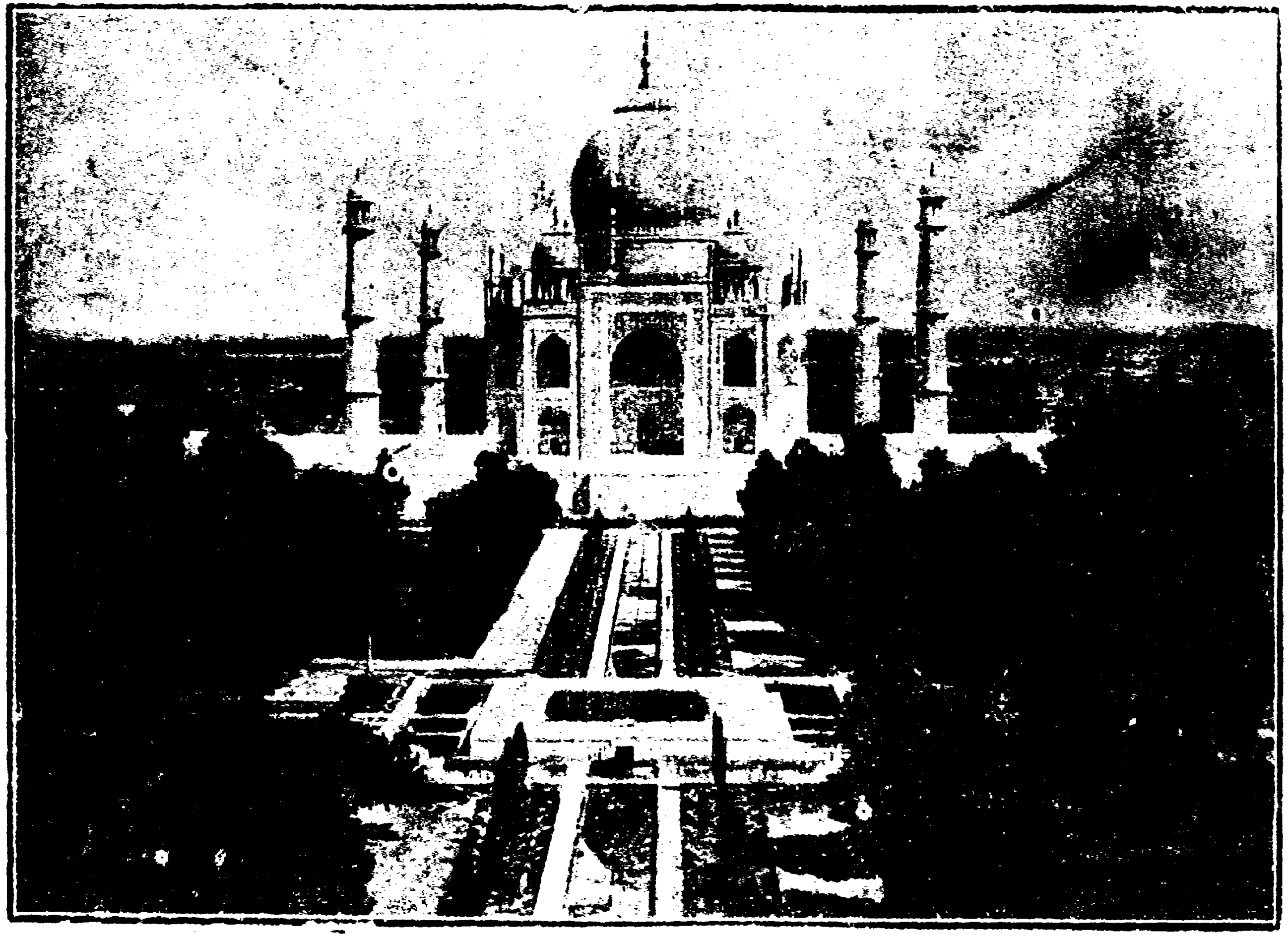
But the most important building of Shah Jahan's time is the Taj-Mahal, a magnificent marble mausoleum, built by the Emperor at a cost of fifty lacs of rupees, over the grave of his queen Mumtaz Mahal. It is the finest flower of Mughal art and most glorious monument of conjugal love, harmony and fidelity in the world. It is 'a combination of the finest art and the most expert construction.' It exhibits the highest artistic merit, extraordinary scientific thought and remarkable technical skill, a splendid lay out and the most sensuous charm. For its beauty, magnificence, lavish ornamentation, exquisite

appearance, lovely dignity, ornamental gardens, complete lucidity and coherence of external architectural effect, unity of designs and the artistic synthesis of execution it is rightly regarded as one of the wonders of the world. Percy Brown observes that it marks the perfect moment in the evolution of architecture during the Mughal age.

There is no evidence worthy of consideration to support the belief that the European architect designed the Taj and superintended the *pietra-dura*. Vincent Smith in his *History of Fine Arts in India and Ceylon*, p. 416-419 discusses all the facts relating to this topic. He holds the opinion that the Taj Mahal is 'the product of a combination of European and Asiatic genius'. But it is a wrong view. E. B. Havell and Percy Brown support the view that it is wholly indigenous and was the logical evolution of the Mughal architecture. It has been proved on reasonable grounds that the Taj is the product of Indian genius.

Another renowned work of art of Shah Jahan's reign was the peacock throne. It "was in the form of a cot bedstead on golden legs. The enamelled canopy was supported by twelve emerald pillars, each of which bore two peacocks encrusted with gems. A tree covered with diamonds, emeralds, rubies and pearls stood between the birds of each pair." This throne was removed to Persia in 1739 by Nadir Shah.

Architecture under Aurangzeb and after him. With the death of Emperor Shah Jahan art declined, because his son and successor Aurangzeb, being puritan, ceased to encourage it and erect new buildings. In fact, he was more eager to demolish Hindu temples than to construct splendid edifices of his own. However, a few structures of his reign deserve mention. They are the little marble mosque in Delhi fort for his private use, the mosque and its tall minarets in Banaras constructed on the ruins of the holy temple of Vishwanath, and the Badshahi mosque in Lahore, almost a copy of the great Jami Masjid at Delhi but inferior to that noble building. Fergusson considers it as the latest specimen of the Mughal architectural style. Aurangzeb's own tomb at Aurangabad in the Deccan is most splendid. All these structures are but feeble imitations of the older models of the Mughals. In the eighteenth and early



The Taj Mahal, Agra.

nineteenth centuries some buildings were constructed by the Nawabs of Oudh and the Nizam of Hyderabad. The tomb of Nawab Safdar Jang of Oudh near Delhi, constructed in 1756, a passable copy of the mausoleum of Humayun, is marred by wretched plaster decoration in the interior. About the architecture in Oudh Smith remarks that the shoddy buildings of the Nawab Vazirs at Lucknow are pretentious abominations. Structures erected after Aurangzeb exhibit the bankruptcy of taste and poverty of designs.

Mughal Gardens[1]. The account of the architecture of the Mughals would be incomplete if their landscape architecture, illustrated by extensive ornamental gardens or certain appropriate sites, is not mentioned here. The Mughals had cultivated deep love for nature. Babar and his descendants revelled in trees and flowers and landscape gardening as a favourite diversion from the toils of political life. Consequently they laid out extensive gardens. Later on principal Mughal buildings especially tombs were surrounded by park-like enclosures. The gardens of the Mughal Emperors and even the gardens of their Amirs like Pinjaur near Kalka show a remarkable sense of beauty and are noted for a continuous flow of water in them. The Mughal gardens 'were worked out in a regular arrangement of squares, often sub-divided into smaller squares to form the favourite figure of the *Char-bagh* or 'four-fold plot'. There were paved path-ways, avenues and ornamental water channels and fountains. In the central place masonary pavilions were erected.

Babar laid out a large garden called the Kabul Bagh at Panipat to commemorate his victory over Ibrahim Lodhi in 1526. Jahangir and his consort, the empress Nur Jahan, laid out gardens wherever they stayed and Jahangir in his Memoirs records the intense pleasure which he derived from them. The Shalimar, Nishat and other gardens in Kashmir are perhaps the best examples of the Mughal taste for garden, love for nature and sense of aesthetic beauty. The enchanting scenery in which they are embosomed add much to their beauty.

Refer to *Gardens of the Great Mughals* by C. M. Villiers-Stuart.

The Hindu Architecture. Great Hindu princes during the Mughal period continued to patronise art. Their building activity manifested in the erection of palaces, forts, *ghats*, *bunds*, citadels, temples, etc. The famous palace called *Man-Mandir* erected by Maharaja Mansingh in Gwalior fort a few years before the advent of the Mughals, is noted for its romantic treatment, outstanding architectural characteristic and joyous colouring. It is a representative example of decorative architecture. But the secular architecture of the Hindus underwent very notable change during the Mughal period. The Hindu princes of this age borrowed many of their architectural forms from the Mughal art of building. While constructing palaces in their capitals they imitated the Diwan-i-Am, Diwan-i-Khas, Shish Mahal and the *Baradari* of the Imperial palaces. The resultant architecture, therefore, differed both from the earlier Hindu-structures and from the Mughal imperial residences. It represented the blending of the Rajput and Persian influences. 'Mughal foundation breaking out into Hindu exuberance' is well illustrated in the palaces at Amber and Jodhpur. The great palace of Bir Singh Bundela of Orchha, another palace at Datia, both in the Vindhya Pradesh region, the Bikaner fort and palace, the Udaipur buildings and island palaces, the Jodhpur fort palace, the Amber palaces, Ajmer lake pavilions and the Lotus Mahal and a garden palace in Vijaynagar are among the surviving examples of the Hindu architecture of the period under review.

The Mughal age also witnessed revival of temple architecture in the traditional style. The religious toleration of the early Mughals encouraged the restoration of the old Hindu temples and the erection of new ones by Hindu princes, grandees and merchants. Mathura and Banaras again became the centres of temple-building activity. The most notable temple of the age was constructed by Bir Singh, but it was destroyed by Shah Jahan. However, the majority of the great temples that survive in northern India today belong to the Mughal period.

The Deccan Architecture. During the Mughal period, the Sultans of Bijapur and Golkunda have a special claim for remembrance for their architectural achivement which have

been already dealt with in the preceding chapter. The Deccan Sultan's beautiful gardens, magnificent public-baths, lovely royal palaces, fine mosques, and splendid tombs reflect the riches of the Muslim kingdoms of the Deccan, the refined taste of their Persianised Sultans, their spirit of luxury and happy blending of the Hindu-Muslim styles.

Painting[1]. Painting has always been a speciality of the court in India. Besides the mural paintings which were considered the supreme examples of the painting art, portraiture and pictures were cultivated as courtly hobbies of Hindu rulers and nobles. But the Sultans of Delhi did not encourage the art of painting of portraits and wall decorations. However, the Mughals revived the art of painting. The Mughal painting represented a happy mingling of foreign (Persian) and Indian elements. A provincialised Chinese art, which was a mixture of Indian, Buddhist, Iranian, Hellenic and Mangolian elements, was introduced into Iran or Perisa by its Mangol conquerors in the thirteenth century. It continued to flourish under the patronage of their Timurid successors. The Mughals, being closely connected with the Persian court, imported this art of painting into India. During the reign of Emperor Akbar the sailent features of this Indo-Sino-Persian art were mingled and assimilated by the contemporary Indian schools of painting which flourished in Gujrat, Rajasthan, Bijapur, Ahmednagar, Vijaynagar, etc. This led to the growth of a particular style of painting called the Indo Persian school of painting. But gradually the foreign Mangoloid elements disappeared and distinctly Indian ones asserted and predominated. Paintings of the *Khandan-i-Timuria* and the *Padshahnamah* manuscripts in the Khudabaksh Library of Patna, clearly illustrate this change in the art of the painting of the period. It was during the reign of Akbar that the art of Mughal painting rose in prominence, it attained its apogee under Jahangir, blossomed luxuriantly with the magnificence of Shah Jahan, but under the

[1] Refer to *Indian Painting* by Percy Brown ; *Court Painter of the Grand Mughals* by L. Binyon ; *Indian Sculpture and Painting* by E. B. Havell.

rule of puritan Aurangzeb its death-knell was sounded. Though it lingered on as a decandent art under the Nawabs of Oudh till the close of the eighteenth century, but it practically ceased to exist with the advent of the British rule. Though short its duration was, it was a brilliant episode in the history of Indian art. (Percy Brown)

Painting before Akbar. Babar who was a great lover of beauty and art patronised the art of painting. He employed court painters and the paintings in the Alwar manuscript of the Persian version of the Memoirs of Babar exhibit the kind of work they produced. His successor Humayun developed a good taste for painting during his exile in Persia. While coming back to India he brought with him Mir Sayyid Ali Tabrezi and Khwaja Abdus Samad who were master painters of Persia. They illustrated a copy of the *Dastan-i-Amir Hamzah* and worked with their Indian assistants and thus formed the nucleus of the Mughal school of painting.

Painting under Akbar. Painting made remarkable progress in the time of Akbar. He created a separate department of painting with Khwaja Abdus Samad at its head. His personal interest in the department and generous aesthetic temperament, his sympathetic attitude towards the foreign artists and his religious toleration and active association with the Hindus gave every kind of encouragement to the art of painting and influenced its course. The result was the fusion of Hindu and Sino-Persian styles in the technique, variety and quality of colours. 'A new school (of painting) began to flourish, a school entirely of portraiture and illustration, delighting in animated and crowded scenes in dramatic motives.' Akbar invited painters from every part of India and even from outside. Though they belonged to different creeds and castes, they had placed before them the common ideal of producing works of great merit. Akbar extended his liberal patronage to Hindu as well as Muslim painters. It is reported that Akbar had an album of portraits. He got the walls of his new capital at Fatehpur Sikri embellished with the master-pieces of the art of painting. We are told that more than a hundred painters acquired great eminence, while the number of lesser men rose by hundreds in the time of Akbar.

The Persian or other foreign painters were few in number in the court of Akbar, the most famous among them were Abdus Samad, Farrukh Beg and Jamshed. The Hindu artists, the excellence of whose skill was especially admired by Akbar, predominated and out of the seventeen leading painters of Akbar's reign no less than thirteen were Hindus. Abul Fazal considered that "few in the whole world are found equal to them." They "excelled in potraiture, book illustration and animal painting." Most famous among them were Daswant, Baswan, Sanwal Das, Tarachand, Lal-Kesu, Mukund and Haribans. Akbar encouraged pictorial art in all possible ways and engaged master painters to illustrate numerous famous works as the *Chingeznamah*, the *Zafarnamah*, the *Ramayan*, *Kaliyadaman*, and *Ayardanish*. The best works of painting were undertaken when Akbar was staying at his new capital Fatehpur Sikri.

Akbar tried to give a religious outlook to his patronage of painting by holding that "the painter has quite peculiar means of realising divinity." By thus raising painting in Muslim estimate, by organising weekly court exhibitions and offering suitable rewards, by giving his own criticism and suggestions, providing studios for artists, enrolling over a hundred artists in the ranks of *mansabdars*, *ahadis* and infantrymen and by improving the production and marketing of the art materials Akbar gave Indian painting a very strong impetus. But painting under Akbar was only an art of the court. It had no profound association with the people or their country. The subjects of painting were taken from incidents associated with the life of the Emperor and the imperial court. Consequently only portraiture could reach the lower strata of society. Besides this, it should be noted that Akbar's patronage 'would have resulted in less of value had it not been for the example and opportunity it gave for the revival indigenous schools of Indian art.'

Painting under Jahangir. The school of painting that evolved under Akbar continued to flourish in the reign of his successor Jahangir due to his enthusiastic patronage. Jahangir who was unable to understand 'the largeness and breadth

required for architectural effect' had a trained eye for picture. He was an excellent connoisseur, a keen collector of historical paintings and an art-critic who possessed the skilled knowledge of an expert. He had gained such rich experience of painting that he could tell the names of individual artists by seeing their paintings. Being a keen student of miniature painting, he constantly added to the state galleries the best samples of all the schools of art in India or abroad. His knowledge of the classical aspects of painting and his zeal for the art, combined with the skill of his court artists, led to the liberation of the Mughal art of painting from the tutelage of Persian influences and to the growth of art style essentially Indian, leaning more and more to Hindu tradition. Mughal painting may be said to have reached its zenith under Emperor Jahangir and the best art of the period is delightfully fresh and natural. The artistic intuition and personality of Jahangir, his keen interest in painting and rare judgement of artists his enthusiastic royal patronage and peaceful and settled condition of the country contributed for the development of the Mughal painting to its fullest extent. Jahangir's reign is called the golden age of the Mughal painting. Natural scenes, especially hunting scenes and portraiture were the favourite subjects of Jahangir's painters. They were painted with all their reality. Painting of plants, creepers, flowers, animals, birds, and numerous other natural objects reached the highest stage of development. Unusual flowers and rare animals were ordered to be copied or painted by Jahangir. Though they were most elaborate and faithful productions, sometimes doubts arose about their reality. Western paintings which were arriving in India at this time were also frequently copied. The great painters of Jahangir's time were Farruk Beg, Mohammed Nadir, Mohammed Murad, Aqa Raiza and Ustad Mansur. It is true that the Hindu painters of the age were not favoured by Jahangir. However, Bishan Das, Keshava Manohar, Madhav and Tulsi flourished at this time and gained considerable reputation. Bishan Das was "unequalled in his age for taking likeness." With Jahangir, however, the real spirit of the Mughal art died and Percy Brown rightly observed, "With his (Jahangir's) passing the soul of Mughal painting also departed."

Painting under Shah Jahan. As Shah Jahan was more interested in architecture and jewellery than painting, the first sign of deterioration in the art of painting was visible in his reign. The number of court artists was also reduced. Consequently paintings of Shah Jahan's time do not have originality, life and vigour. There is nothing extraordinary in their creation and composition. The quantity of painting executed about this time was maintained but the quality was inferior. Painters confined their art to the painting of imperial magnificence, royal court, palace life of the luxurious nobles, their valuable jewelled ornaments and dresses. Consequently such painting had elaborate ornamentation. Painting under Jahangir had beautiful harmonious mixing of colours ; but painting in the time of Shah Jahan had an increased sense of richness and luxury in colouring ; and the court portraiture and pictures were characterised by rich pigments and a lavish use of gold. Mosaic colouring, the glowing effects of which were heightened with burnish gold, was the chief characteristic of this time. Portraiture is considered to be a special feature of Shah Jahan's reign. But he had withdrawn imperial patronage from 'Mughal Painting'. Consequently the artists were compelled to seek employment under princes and nobles and set up their studios in the market places to display and sell their pictures to earn their livelihood. They had to work under adverse circumstances for scanty remuneration. However, prince Dara Shikoh (whose album of paintings is found in India Office, London) was a great lover and liberal patron of art, but his premature death gave a setback to painting. A few nobles also patronised the art of painting. Asaf Khan was one of them. His palace at Lahore was decorated with master-pieces of painting. The most famous painters of Shah Jahan's time were Mir Hashim, Anup Chitra and Chitramani.

Painting under Aurangzeb. With the accession of Aurangzeb the decadence of the Mughal painting steadily continued. The final blow to the Mughal painting was dealt by Aurangzeb as he regarded its patronage opposed to the precepts of sacred Islamic law. It is said that he had defaced the paintings in the Asar Mahal at Bijapur and got the figures in Akbar's mauso-

leum at Sikandra white washed. However, painters did not disappear wholly in the reign of Aurangzeb. We have pictures of Aurangzeb's battles and sieges. They reveal that he did not entirely discourage the art of painting. Apart from this, numerous portraits of Aurangzeb in many situations were painted, with or without his consent, and he is reported to have inspected periodically some portraits of his unfortunate rebellious son Mohammed Sultan to find out how he fared in his prison cell. It is said that Aurangzeb's expeditions and conquests in southern India introduced the style of Mughal painting into the Deccan.

Painting after Aurangzeb. After the death of Aurangzeb and subsequent decline of the Mughal empire some of the Mughal painters migrated to the provincial kingdoms of Oudh, Hyderabad, Mysore and Bengal. They carried on their old traditions there. But the patronage that they got there and the work that they executed there were far inferior to that of the great Imperial Mughals. During the nineteenth century what remained of the Mughal painting was influenced by the European pictures, which were brought into India at this time. Many artists readily adopted the European style to suit the taste of the English merchants and officials. Percy Brown remarks that the Mughal school of painting originated in the atmosphere of imperial style. "Its existence depended largely on aristocratic patronage and when this was withdrawn the end came. Its roots never panetrated to the subsoil of India proper, but as a splendid pictorial record of Mughal pageantry and power it holds a prominent position in the history of Indian painting."

Salient features of the Mughal school of painting. 1. The Mughal pictures were small in size. They never attained the dignity and size of the Buddhist frescoes of the Hindu times. Therefore the Mughal pictures were known as 'miniature painting.'

2. Numerous had been the subjects of the Mughal painting. They were mainly scenes from actual life, hunting, fighting, battles and sieges, imperial court, historical episodes, mythological stories of the Hindus, various objects of nature like birds, trees, plants, flowers, etc. But there was neither mysticism nor real pictures of domestic life.

3. Though the Mughal art absorbed the Indian atmosphere, the Mughal style neither represented the Indian emotions, nor the scenes from the daily life of the Indians. The objects of Indian nature like *pipal*, mango and banyan trees, deer, lion, peacocks etc. and Indian dresses and ornaments were faithfully painted but the life of the people was never reflected. The art of painting under the Mughals was not profoundly associated with the people. It gave pleasure to princely connoisseurs. It was courtly and aristocratic art, remote from folk sentiment. Thus the Mughal paintings fail to throw light on the life of the masses in the Mughal age.

4. A keen appreciation of nature was a remarkable characteristic of the Mughal artists and it was fostered by the imperial court, especially Jahangir's. Not only birds and animals were painted after close observation, but broad borders of foliated designs were common in the Mughal miniatures and in the jungle scenes landscape was rendered with great feeling and accuracy.

5. The Mughals and their aristocrats speedily developed portrait-painting and the Mughal artists revealed a remarkable natural gift for portraiture. The Mughal portrait-painter was noted for his rich colouring, sympathetic out-line drawing, decorative treatment and the delineation of the actual features. The face, head, hand and fingers were painted with a marvel of likeness, fineness and finish. But, as the portrait painting was controlled by certain laws, bound by traditions, tied to the imperial majesty and magnificence and ruled by the changing fashions of the imperial court, the Mughal portrait became 'stiff and lifeless works, lacking in interest and conviction.' When demand for a cheap and popular form of portraiture arose during the closing years of the Mughal rule, the art had degenerated into a system of stereotyped copying made by careful tracings in a brush outline. However, a good Mughal portrait possessed a charm and quality, peculiarly its own.

6. The Mughal artists excelled in colour composition which was generally a beautiful mosaic of reds and blues and gold. As regards their style, they were noted for "the minuteness of the treatment, the decorative composition, the extremely fine

and short out-line, the free use of gold on costumes and background, and the application of elaborately designed patterns to the garments' trappings and accessories."

The Rajput School of Painting (1550-1750 A. D. approximately). Traces of fresco-painting in the medieval palaces of the Rajput princes of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Bikaner and other places indicate that the indigenous art of painting continued to survive. The ancient Hindu school of painting, a direct descendant of the classic frescoes of Ajanta, did not merge in the new developments under the Mughals. Contacts with the Persian and Mughal styles provided strong stimulus to it and it had an interesting revival. The revived Hinduism, the Bhakti cult, the dramatic nature of the temple processions, the picturesque ritual of the religion and keen interest in mythological literature further aided to its revival. It flourished in the courts of Hindu princes in Rajasthan and Madhya Bharat. Jaipur, the capital of one of the leading states of the Rajputs, became its famous centre. Consequently it was known as the Rajput school of painting. It rose in prominence in the later half of the sixteenth century and after the efflorescence of two hundred years it declined. But some families of Rajput painters found shelter and patronage in the Himalayan States. Therefore an offshoot of the Rajput school of painting manifested itself in small states of the Punjab Himalayan region in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some art-critics have called it Kangra school of painting as Kangra was the leading Himalayan state ; others have designated it as *Pahari* or belonging to the mountains. The Rajput painting was noted for decorative detail, the pahari painting was for the display of emotions. The Pahari painting was an art of patient labour and naive devotion and was famous for delicacy of line and brilliancy of colour. The subjects of Pahari painting covered wider field compared to those of the Rajput art. Besides illustrating the mythological and religious stories from the Purans the Pahari artists painted portraits, *rag mala* (group of Indian musical compositions) and scenes of farmer's life.

Difference between the Rajput painting and the Mughal painting. The Mughal art was aristocratic and genuinely realis-

tic, while the Rajput painting was democratic and chiefly mystic. Rajput school of painting was noted for brilliancy effect. Its themes were popular and familiar. It expressed through line and colour the emotions of a race reputed for its noble qualities and brave deeds. It was largely a folk art. It mirrored the life of the simple Indian villager, his religion and its picturesque atmosphere and ceremonies, his pursuits and pastimes. Familiar scenes of the bazar, occupations of craftsmen, field and farms, ordinary incidents of journey like mid-day rest or sojourn in the *sarai* etc. were painted with grace, charm and sincerity. Many incidents from the Ramayan and the Mahabharat were taken for themes. As the Buddha and stories of his past and present lives became the main subjects of the Ajanta art, Krishna in all his varied character was the central figure of the Rajput painting. Together with Krishna animals like cows, elephants, peacocks, deer etc. were also represented with a deep knowledge of nature. The Mughal school of painting dealt with the materialistic aspect of the animal life (the hunting of wild beasts, fighting of elephants, deer etc.), the Rajput art dignified these creatures by giving them external forms of Hindu deities, for example the representation of Hanuman, the monkey-god. Besides Krishna, Shiva and his consort Parvati were also represented with reverence. Human passion, pathos, compassion, sympathy, affection, love, mercy and other human virtues were depicted in realistic sketches by the facile brush of the Rajput painters. The lover and beloved took the form of Krishna and Radha respectively. Love, romance and religion were happily symbolised in popular divinities. Thus the Rajput school of painting had so beautifully harmonised and blended the human life and religion that in its spiritual ideology it became superior to the Mughal art of painting. The Mughal painting was confined to the majesty and magnificence of the imperial court and it became limited and unnatural in exhibiting the Mughal splendour and luxury. On the contrary, the Rajput painting was the art of the people. It closely associated religion with art and with its spiritual and emotional inspirations it superseded the secular and matter-of-fact Mughal style. If the Mughal painting was materialistic, the Rajput painting

was spiritual ; the one aimed at the entertainment, the other at reflecting the sweet serenity of Indian life and illustrating the religious beliefs of the people. Like the Mughal artists the Rajput painters painted portraits to maintain the traditions set by the Mughals. Local Rajas, princes and nobles were represented posing at windows or reclining on mats often smoking *hukka*. Frequently *sadhus* or saints were also painted. But a Rajput portrait did not possess 'the rich glowing effect or vigorous spirit of the Mughal portrait.' Besides getting their portraits painted, the Hindu rulers, princes and grandees in imitation of the Mughal emperors got their libraries filled with albums of masterpieces of painting and illuminated books, the magnificence of which can easily be imagined from the collection at Jaipur in Rajasthan.

Calligraphy. Closely allied with the art of painting was that of calligraphy, which was the only form of art permitted by extreme Islamic orthodoxy. It was cultivated assiduously in many Mohammedan countries. Large sums were paid for the work of famous calligraphists by connoisseurs. "Calligraphy also entered largely into the decoration of the mosque ; the ninety-nine Divine names and Qoranic texts are inscribed round the portal and on the walls, and appear in the tracery of the windows. There are various types of lettering, from the stiff upright Kufic to the flowing Nastalik beloved of Akbar."[1] The *Ain-i-Akbari* provides us a list of the famous penmen of Akbar's court. The most famous and distinguished among them was Mohammed Husain of Kashmir. The title of Zarrinqalam (Gold-Pen) was conferred on him.

Music. The Mughals actively patronised music. Babar was fond of music. He composed songs many of which have survived him. Lane-Pool informs us that the art of improving a quatrain on the spot, quoting Persian classics and singing a good song were highly applauded in the reign of Babar. His successor Humayun loved music and patronised musicians and singers whose company he frequently enjoyed. He fixed two days—Monday and Wednesday—for listening to music. The

India : A Short Cultural History by H. G. Rawlinson, p. 368.

Surs like the Mughals extended their patronage to music. Akbar was a great lover of music. He had a good knowledge of the technique of music and played exquisitely on the Indian instrument, *naqqarah*, and he is reported to have composed tunes. His liberal patronage and keen interest in music attracted to the imperial court a large number of musicians—Hindus, Iranis, Turanis and Kashmiris, both men and women. The court musicians were arranged in seven groups, one for each day in the week and Akbar used to listen to their music with rapt attention. The most renowned of these was Miyan Tansen of Gwalior about whom Abul Fazal writes that "a singer like him has not been in India for the last thousand years." Baz Bahadur of Malwa employed by Akbar was also noted for his music and Hindi songs. He is described by Abul Fazal as "the most accomplished man of his day in the science of music and in Hindi songs." With the exception of Mubarak and Abul Fazal the *amirs* and courtiers of Akbar like Abdur Rahim Khan-i-Khanah, Raja Bhagwan Das and Mansingh patronised musicians. This contributed substantially to the growth of the Hindustani music. The celebrated singers and musicians composed and introduced new varieties of *Ragas* like *tarana*, *thumari*, *gajal*, *qawwali*, etc., and some Sanskrit works written on music were translated into Persian language. The close association of the Hindu and Muslim musicians and exchange of thought between the two also aided much to the general progress of music in the period. Some art-critics hold the opinion that the synthesis of the Iranian and Indian music led to the rise of a new style of music which was more refined and charming than the two.

The traditions of Akbar's court were continued by his son and successor Jahangir. He also patronised musicians. Sir J. N. Sarkar in his book "*Studies in Mughal India*" points out that Shah Jahan was a great lover of music. He composed certain sweet and charming Hindi songs and enjoyed vocal as well as instrumental music. Hindu musicians with others were patronised by him. Jagannath and Janardan Bhatt of Bikaner were the leading Hindu musicians of his court. After the death of Shah Jahan the art of music was disfavoured. It gradually

declined. His successor Aurangzeb was well-versed in the science of music. But being a bigoted and puritan Muslim he was averse to practical performance and therefore he discouraged music, placed a ban upon it and drove away the musicians from his court. Consequently Mughal singers and musicians sought shelter in the courts of the provincial kings. Bhagdatt who flourished in the court of Rana Anup Singh was the most celebrated musician of the period. After the death of Aurangzeb, Mohammed Shah patronised music and revived it. During his reign the Mughal court was resounding with the *Khyalas* of famous musicians Adarang and Sadarang. Besides this, Shori Miyan and others introduced new *ragas* and styles. After some years Shri Niwas had composed his famous work on music called *Ragtatwa Nava Bodh.* Apart from Mughals, the Sultans of the Deccan maintained an army of musicians. Golkunda was supposed to have as many as 20,000 musicians In all Hindu courts of the period music was considered an essential part of life.

The Mughal court witnessed a change in the status of musicians. The Hindus regarded music pre-eminently a religious art. Those who were devoted to it or followed it as a profession were not socially degraded. Even today in the Deccan many master musicians are Brahmans of the highest social position. Some of the Hindu rulers attained proficiency in all forms of music. But in Muslim courts, music, though greatly patronised, was considered a degraded profession, because the main performers were *ustads* and dancing girls of ill repute. As a result of this the popularity of music was reduced with the educated middle classes. They looked upon it as one of the hobbies of the amirs and the luxuries of aristocracy. The ordinary people greatly disfavoured education in music and consequently a keen distinction between the music of the schools and that of *ustads* and folk songs and music of the people gradually developed. One can still observe it in northern India. On the contrary, in the southern India, 'music continued to be the common heritage of prince and peasant alike.'

Other arts. The account of fine arts under the Mughals would be incomplete if other arts are not mentioned here.

Though there was the *Qoranic* prohibition, sculpture was cultivated to some degree. We are told that the figures of Jaimal and Patta, the defenders of the fort of Chittor in 1568, were erected and placed outside the gates of the fort of Delhi and the statues of Amarsingh and Pratap, the Ranas of Chittor, beneath the audience window at Agra. The art of jewellery attained a high level of perfection. The famous Peacock Throne of diamonds, emeralds, rubies and pearls and its enamelled canopy mark the crowning triumph of the art of jewellery. Goldsmith's art reached a high degree of excellence and demand for inlaid work, damascening and enamelling was increasing considerably. Gold and silver ornaments were very popular. The imperial mints at various places produced a fine series of Gold, silver and copper coins, generally stamped with calligraphic devices. The art of embroidery made considerable progress. It was patronised in the imperial palaces. The art of weaving and dyeing was cultivated with remarkable success. Excellent carpets of the richest silk, brocades, silks, muslins, shawls and chintzes of this age became famous all over the world.

The legacies of the Muslim Age and the Mughal Rule[1]

The age of the Delhi Sultans and the Empire of the Mughals had vanished for ever, but their relics have survived in numerous forms, visible and invisible. They have become their valuable legacies. The following have been the gifts of the Muslim Age and the Mughal rule in India.

1. *Restoration of touch with the outer world.* The close commercial and cultural contact between India and the other countries of Asia and eastern Europe, established in the early Buddhist Age, was lost about the eight century A. D. But it was restored by the Muslim conquest at the end of the twelfth century. It widened the Indian outlook. Both sea-borne trade of India and her navy were also revived. Not only the long streams of caravans passed through the frontier passes of India

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[1] *India Through the Ages* by J. N. Sarkar, pp. 42-53 ; *Mughal Administration* by J. N. Sarkar, pp. 231-241; *Mughal Empire in India* by S. R. Sharma, pp. 860-870.

but ships began to sail from the ports on her coast. Thousands of foreigners began to enter into India and during the hundred and fifty years of the great Mughals India's name stood high in the world and she was ranked among the most civilised and powerful nations.

2. *Internal Peace.* There reigned peace and order internally over a large part of India, especially north of the Vindhya mountain. This promoted the growth of industries and brought about general happiness and prosperity.

3. *Uniform and centralised system of government.* Sir Jadunath Sarkar observes that nearly two hundred years of the Mughal rule in the country provided to the whole of northern India and to much of the Deccan uniform centralised administrative system. It gave not only official language and coinage but a popular *lingua franca* called Hindustani for the people of all classes except the Brahmans and the stationary village-folk. Some features of the Mughal system of administration are still traceable in India. The Mughal land revenue system and the divisions of the country into *subas*, *sarkars* and *parganas* still continue under new names. Present provincial and district administrations are derived from Mughal prototype. Even a staunch champion of Hinduism like Shivaji at first imitated the Mughal administration in Maharashtra, but later on he gave a Hindu colour to it by substituting Sanskrit names and titles for Persian ones. Present Civil Service, composed of men-of-all-work to administer imperial and local affairs, is the relic of the *mansabdari* system of the Mughals, shorn of its feudal and military character. In judiciary some of the present laws are derived from the Mughal codes. A few Mughal canals are still existing and irrigating even today large tracts of agricultural land.

There was one and the same system of administration all over the Mughal Empire. All the twenty *subas* of the vast empire of the Mughals were governed by exactly one and the same administrative machinery. They followed the same methods, procedure, official designations and titles and used one language, Persian, for official purposes. Many times Government officials, soldiers, commanders and governors were transferred from one

province to another. Similarly travellers and merchants moved from one place to another, from town to town and *suba* to *suba*. Besides this, the Mughal state was a national State in which all Muslims and Hindus, foreigners and Indians could live comfortably and find employment for their talents. This made all realize the imperial oneness of vast India.

4. *Political Unity*. The Mughal imperialism was responsible for the conquest of India. Indirectly it provided political unity to the country and created a feeling of oneness among the people.

5. *Cultured Life*. The Muslim Age and the Mughal rule had considerably influenced the Hindu culture. Habits, manners, dress and social amenities introduced by the Mughals found general acceptance. There arose uniformity of social manners and dress among the people, irrespective of their creed. *Achkan* and *Pajama* occupied the prominent position. Our present day dress, both for male and female, has been the same as we see in the Mughal paintings. In fact, on our dress, etiquette, speech, manners, thought, literature, music, painting and architecture the impress of the Mughals is clearly visible. They are neither purely Hindu nor purely Muslim, but a happy and harmonious fusion of the two. The earlier Muslims aimed at destroying everything that was Hindu, whereas the Mughals assimilated and synthesised Hindu and Muslim things and re-created them in immortal forms. In fact, in the realm of culture the Mughal period witnessed both a harmonisation and a revival.

6. *Spirit of social reforms and innovations*. The Mughal emperors were as daring in their social reforms and innovations as they were adventurous in the realm of politics. Akbar had great enthusiasm for reforms. He tried to found a new society in India—nay a new nation which would be neither Hindu nor Muslim, but exclusively Indian. He attempted to prohibit cow-killing and sati system, to raise the age for circumcision, and marriage, control drinking and prostitution, wipe out communal differences, abolish invidious taxes based on religious differences, appoint persons to the posts of trust and responsibility irrespective of caste, creed or race and encourage intermarriages between different communities. He aimed at the

social synthesis and the present day government of India is directing its activities towards the same.

7. *Spirit of luxury and fine arts.* The Muslim influence was greatly felt on the articles of luxury and fine arts and the Mughals fostered the spirit of unexampled luxury. The Mughals who were leading generally a more luxurious life than the Hindus encouraged several manufactures and fine arts. New articles of food and fruit, new style of cookery and new costumes were introduced. All these were saturated with a spirit of luxury. Consequently industries of refined kind, shawl-making, kimkhab, muslin, carpets, etc. were liberally patronised and promoted. Music and painting also received a great impetus. Present day Indian music and musical instruments betray traces of Mughal influence. The impress of the Mughal music is seen in *qawwali*, *thumari* and *ghazal* which still survive. Similarly *tabla* and *sarangi*, two remarkable instruments, are the legacies of the Muslim age. A new school of painting rose in the Mughal period. Indian painting 'with its delicate touches and delightful hues is but a vivid reflection of those picturesque times.' Numerous notable works of the Mughal school of painting now enrich the valuable collection of a large number of museums all over the world. The Persian and Chinese influences in the realm of painting were completely shaken off and the long process of Indianisation of painting reached its climax under Emperor Jahangir. Undoubtedly the highest genius was displayed by Indian artists in the Mughal age.

8. *Indo-Saracen Art.* One of the richest contributions of Muslim Age and the Mughal rule was a new style of architecture (specially palaces, mosques and tombs) and artificial gardening. The greater luxury and the unexampled wealth of the Mughal emperors enabled them to erect magnificent structures of supreme beauty, lay out very big cities and extensive gardens which even today provide great pleasure to millions of people. Before the advent of the Mughals gardens were merely jungles of fruits and flowers. But the Mughal gardens represented highly developed art of gardening. A salient feature of the Mughal gardens was that the water was brought there through canals and then artificial waterfalls were created in the garden.

Another feature was *Barahdari* or an open terraced building in the centre of the garden. The Mughals erected numerous buildings and laid out towns. They exhibit precisely the mingling of Hindu and Muslim conception of architecture, the happy blending of elegance and strength. The city of Fatehpur Sikri, laid out and built by Akbar, has endured as an example of the fusion of Hindu and Muslim ideals of architecture. The distinguished characteristics of the buildings, palaces, tombs and mosques of this age are open courtyard encompassed by chambers or colonnades, huge graceful domes, vaulted gateways, lofty minars, well chiselled stones, mosaic work, etc. Of the Taj, the Moti Masjid, the Red Fort and the splendid palaces therein, the *Buland Darwaza* and the graceful tomb of Itimad-ud-daullah little need be said.

9. *Growth of vernacular literature.* The Mughals provided a feeling of security which in its turn brought leisure and passion for the working of the mind. Consequently there was a sudden growth of vernacular literature in all provinces. The Bhakti movement and the monotheistic movement in the realm of religion enriched the Indian literature. The literary impulse provided by the peace and prosperity of Emperor Akbar's long and successful reign, his royal patronage and the encouragement by his vassal princes and feudal lords led to a wonderful and remarkable flowering of the Indian intellect in the closing years of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries. Banaras again became famous as the centre of a notable revival of Hindu intellect, a radiating centre of Hindu culture. Once again it flourished as a great university. Celebrated learned scholars, poets and writers like Khanda Deva, Raghunath Siromani and Kavindra Acharya, a friend of Emperor Shah Jahan and one of the *gurus* of prince Dara Shikoh, adorned the great centre of Banaras. The Mughal age was noted for a great outburst of literary activities. The literatures of vernaculars, Indian-Persian, Sanskrit and Urdu have come down to the present Indian generation with the impress of writers and poets who either directly or indirectly enjoyed Mughal patronage and favour.

10. *Indo-Persian Literature.* A considerable Persian litera-

ture was produced in India during the period under review. It is a part of the noble heritage of India, an outstanding contribution by Indian Islam and its followers to the general treasury of Indian culture.

11. *The Growth of the Urdu Language.* A significant legacy of the Mughals was the development of the Urdu language. It was the outcome of the contact between the Muslims and the Hindus. It made considerable progress during the Mughal Age.

12. *Hindustani.* Another notable legacy of the Muslim rule was the evolution of a common *lingua franca* called *Hindustani* or *Rekhta.* It was an official prose style, mostly the creation of Hindu clerks called *munshis* who wrote in Persian. Later on it was borrowed by the Maratha *chitnises* to serve the purpose of their own vernacular.

13. *Improvement in the Art of Warfare.* The age under review witnessed a considerable improvements in the art of warfare and the introduction of gunpowder and artillery, which claimed a decided superiority over the old Hindu methods of war. The steel and the soldier became important factors in warfare. Cavalry rose in great prominence. It eclipsed the elephant of the Hindus. Gradually war elephants fell in disuse. The Hindu rulers imitated the Muslims and replaced their elephants corps with the cavalry units and began to use artillery in battlefields. It was on account of strong cavalry units that the Muslim invaders carried the day frequently. Well-equipped artillery and their particular army organisation in the battle field enabled them to gain victory over their adversaries quickly. But in absence of proper arrangements for supplying provisions to the army, plundering and pillaging villages and letting the horses graze standing crops were very common scenes in war time.

14. *Historical Literature.* It is due to the liberal encouragement of the Muslim rulers that India owned a good collection of historical literature. Many notable works on history were written in the period under review. Prominent historians of the Sultanate and Mughal periods were Barani, Minhaj-ud-din, Shams-i-Siraz, Abul Fazal, Farishta and Khafi Khan. Historical documents, letters, autobiographies and detailed account of the royal dynasties are the gifts of this medieval age.

They have been very helpful in writing the history of the period. Thus new and very useful elements—histories, biographies and letters—were introduced into Indian literature in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

15. *Monotheistic Religious Revival and Sufism.* The impact of Islam—both creed and society—was felt on the Hindu religion and society. The close mutual contacts between the Hindus and the Muslims had profoundly influenced the social and religious trends in India. This has resulted in the revival of monotheistic and anti-caste movements within Hinduism. Dissenting and reforming movements among the Hindus received a great impetus from the presence of the Muslims and their creed. Ramanand, Kabir, Dadu, Nanak, Chaitanya and a few other sects were the natural outcome of the impact. Apart from this, new superstition emulated old credulity. *Pirs* and *Shahids, Murshids* and *Shaikhs, Saints* and *Martyrs* equalled Krishna, Arjun and Bhairava in the number of their gallant deeds and miracles, and this continues even today in the Indian villages.

Islam in its turn was also considerably influenced by Hinduism. It gave rise to Sufism in Islam. Sufism is mainly an offshoot of the *Vedant* of the Hindus. It developed rapidly in Hindu environment and under Akbar and his grandson Dara Shikoh both of whom were noted for their religious toleration. Prince Dara had openly declared that he had found the fullest pantheism (*Tauhid*) in the *Vedant* and it was fostered by many Persian emigrants of liberal religious views.

16. *Other examples of Muslim influence.* The influence of the Muslim rule for six centuries on Indian culture had been wide-spread. Many entertainments like hunting, hawking, animal-fighting and numerous other games became Mohammedanized in method and terminology. In many other professions Muslim outlook has entered deeply. Turkish, Arabic, Persian and Urdu words have been assimilated in the Hindi, Bengali, Gujrati and Marathi languages. In the art of warfare the Hindu princes borrowed a good deal from the Muslims. The Imperial Mughal Army served as a model which the Hindu rulers imitated. The construction of strong, majestic and extensive fortresses, and their defence was consi-

derably improved by the Muslims in India as a result of the general progress of civilisation, the introduction of artillery and the improvement in the art of warfare.

The influence of the Muslims was strongly felt on the administrative system, the organisation of the military and use of arms, the methods of record-keeping, the court of princes, the lives of the well-to-do upper classes, their high standard of living and spirit of luxury, various fine arts especially architecture and gardening and the general etiquette. In the court life, ceremonials, dress and royal titles and office procedure of the State officials 'the Mughal empire set the fashion which the Hindu Rajas often slavishly copied.' The traditions of the Mughal empire were imitated by many princes. In some Rajput and other Hindu States in Rajasthan and Malwa, the official language up to the third decade of the twentieth century continued to be Urdu. They used Persian script instead of Devanagari.

The Muslims, being more luxurious and easy going, encouraged urban population and more refined and elegant tastes in their daily life. These together with their vices were imitated by the wealthy Hindus and the official class. In aesthetics, perfumery and to some extent in music and dancing the Muslim royal families shaped the outlook and guided the taste of the Indian society.

It were the Muslims who introduced paper in India and consequently books could be multiplied in a more attractive and durable form than the palm leaves on which the letters were scratched with a sharp steel point. Several manuscripts were illustrated during the Mughal period. India owes to the Mughals the art of illumination of manuscripts. From Akbar's reign onwards many Hindi and Sanskrit works were beautifully copied and charmingly illustrated for the Hindu princes. The art of Persian book illumination and calligraphy reached such a high level of excellence under the Mughals that it not only continued in India for a long time but won fame even in Europe. It is to the Muslims that India owes the practice of diffusing knowledge by copying the manuscripts and circulating them widely. Another significant legacy of the Muslims that even continues to this day is the *Yunani* or the Greeco-Arab system of medicine.

Chapter 15

Christian Sea-powers in India and the Great Recovery

The Portuguese. An oceanic sense was altogether absent from the policy of the Indian rulers in the medieval age. Consequently in 1499 a Christian naval power—the Portuguese—with its base in Europe entered the Indian waters after the arrival of Vasco da Gama at Calicut. Within a period of hundred and fifty years they had established in India not a territorial empire but the empire of Indian commerce with a few territorial possessions on the western coast. Though the so-called Portuguese empire faded away after the advent of other European sea-powers in India, they made some contribution to the cultural life of India. They have enriched Indian vocabulary and medical science to some extent. "Garcia da Orta's treatise on the medical plants of India is the first systematic study of an important subject. The introduction of printing and the establishment of seminaries for the training of Indian priests at Verapoly and at Goa are notable contributions to enlightenment. The ornate Manuelesque architecture which they popularised on the west coast and the bungalow type of building they introduced are also worthy of mention."[1] The Portuguese as ardent catholic missionaries 'brought the majority of Syrian Christians into the Catholic Church and made India the most Catholic country in the East, outside the Philippines.' It is to these missionaries that the Catholic Church maintains its

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privacy in India and has more numerous members than all other Christian sects put together. The ecclesiastical architecture of India, especially in the Deccan, is Portuguese. The cathedral at Mylapore and many other churches on the western coast testify the enthusiasm of the Portuguese in matters of religion.

Again, the Portuguese then were world famous merchants ; their trade monopoly provided a good world market for Indian goods, especially spices and muslin, on a scale unknown before, and it brought into India the products of other European countries and China—mainly China-ware. Another significant element of the Portuguese trade was the supply of Persian horses to Vijayanagar kingdom whose external trade was practically in their hands.

The Dutch. In the beginning of the seventeenth century the Dutch established their trading centres on the Malabar and the Coromandal coasts and conquered Ceylon in 1654. This sounded a severe blow to the Portuguese power and trade monopoly. But the Dutch never acquired any formidable military power in India, where their possessions grew insignificant before the rising of English settlements and were eventually conquered by the English.

Advent of the English and the French. The East India Company of Britain was established in 1600 for trade with East. After overcoming opposition of the Portuguese, it succeeded in establishing its trading centres in India and secured some commercial privileges from the Mughals. France also entered the fray with the establishment of the French East India Company in 1664. It acquired settlement on the Madras coast. A succession of wars, known as the Carnatic Wars, were waged between the French and the English for he control of Southern India in the middle of the eighteenth century. Both sides enlisted rival factions of Indian powers to help them and the success of the British was due partly to the genius of Clive and partly to the loss of the sea by the French navy. Pondicherry, the capital of the French settlement, was captured by the British in 1761, from which the French never recovered. It was a death knell to their power. With the disappearance of the

French and the death of Tipu Sultan of Mysore, South India passed under the British control. Meanwhile, in northern India the right of collecting revenues of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa had been ceded to Clive in 1765 by Mughal Emperor Shah Alam. By this act, the East India Company became in effect a sovereign power on the mainland of India.

The British Empire of India. This was followed by England's regular fight for supremacy in India. Warren Hastings, the first Governor General of India (1774-1785), to consolidate the Company's possessions waged wars with the Marathas, Haider Ali, Tipu Sultan and the Rohillas and swept clean the Augean stables by his administrative reforms. Cornwallis, his successor, continued the work of consolidation, purified administration, evolved order out of chaos and introduced the famous Permanent Settlement of Bengal. With Wellesley (1798-1805) new era begins. In short campaigns he crushed the power of Mysore and reduced the Maratha leader Peshwa to the position of a subordinate ally. By his subsidiary alliances he made the Indian states dependent on the English Company. Later on Marquis of Hastings (1813-1818) reduced the powers of the Maratha chiefs—Holkar and Scindhia—brought the Rajput states under British control and deposed the Peshwa and annexed his territories in the Deccan. In 1845-48, the Punjab was also annexed after the wars with the Sikhs and then the territories of Oudh were brought under the direct rule of the Company. In the meanwhile, Dalhousie's Doctrine of Lapse brought under the British sway many states like Satara, Jhansi, Nagpur, etc. By 1856, from the Indus to the Brahmaputra, from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin the Union Jack flew in unquestioned supremacy.

In 1857 a great national uprising—the Mutiny—took place. Its aim was the expulsion of the British and the recovery of the national independence. Though it was crushed ruthlessly it is important only from two points of view : (1) it was the last effort of the old order to regain national independence and honour ; it was a heroic effort of a dispossessed people to reassert their national dignity ; (2) it is the great dividing line in Indian history as the policy, practice and ideals of the

government that followed differed fundamentally from the government of the East India Company, which it displaced. The Crown took over the government of India in 1858 and the Company disappeared from the stage of Indian history. The Government of India from 1858 to 1922 confined their activities mainly to the collection of revenues, maintenance of peace and the defence of India's frontiers, and undertook neither schemes for the reorganisation of society, nor for raising the moral and the material standards of the people, nor for increasing national wealth of the country. "They provided the appurtenances of the civilisation but did not undertake the work of civilisation themselves."

Since the beginning of the 20th century Indians launched a vigorous campaign for achieving their national independence. After determined and prolonged struggle under Gandhiji's leadership, Indians compelled Britain to accept finally the principle of India's complete freedom and a new chapter in history opened with the withdrawal of the British and the achievement of India's political freedom in August 1947.

Material development of India under the British. The British rule in India had brought in its train certain material developments which can be described under the following heads :—

1. *Communications and Transport.* As late as the middle of the nineteenth century the means of communications in India were comparatively defective. The railways were unknown and the few trunk roads constructed by Indian rulers were inadequate. The improvements wrought in this direction dating from the time of Lord Dalhousie have brought a social and economic revolution.

(*a*) *Railways.* The construction of a network of railways—the most important part of India's system of communication and transport—is credited to the British rule. The military need of the railways in India was felt during the Sepoy Mutiny and their economic value during the famines. Consequently on the recommendation of the Famine Commission of 1880, the Government of India took to railway construction in right earnest. Due to the profits accruing from the railways, 'they have changed from a suckling baby to a milch cow.' On the

recommendation of the Mackay Committee of 1908 a network of railways has linked up distant parts of the country and since then railways are being extended considerably.

(*b*) *Roads.* During the British rule inadequacy of roads was clearly realised and good metalled roads have now been driven through the plains and hills of every part of India, besides thousands of serviceable *kachha* roads.

(*c*) *Water transport.* Though some rivers have been navigable, the inland water-ways and marine transport could not be developed satisfactorily.

(*d*) *Post, Telegraph and Telephone.* The Post and Telegraph Department provides people easy and rapid means of communication all over the country. The first telegraph line was laid out by Dalhousie and the half-anna postage was his reform. The Post Office acts as a banker and agent of the people enabling them to deposit their savings from all distances. The telephone exchange has totally annihilated distance so that a person in any big capital town in India can now speak on the phone to a person in another similar town.

(*e*) *Wireless and Aviation.* These are the two marvels of the 20th century that have been introduced into India by the British Government. The aviation branch is now counted as a significant factor of Indian communication and the country is linked by airlines to all important countries of the world.

(*f*) *Radios.* The introduction of the Radio has placed India in touch with the whole world. A large number of radio stations have been set up in the country. Now radio is being used for various aspects of national progress.

2. *Agriculture and Irrigation.* During the British rule nothing was done for agriculture for a long time. It was Lord Curzon who set up the Department of Agriculture and since then progress has been continuous. An Imperial Research Institute at Pusa has been opened, Agricultural Colleges have been set up in some provinces and experimental farms have been started for the education of farmers. Great progress has also been made in irrigation and net-works of canals have been constructed in many provinces and vast tracts of barren lands have been claimed. Public works like Sukkhur Barrage, the

Mandi Hydro-Electric Scheme, Sutlej Valley Project, the Havellian Project and a few others have been marvels of engineering skill.

3. *Industries and Trade.* The protectionist policy of England in the eighteenth century and her free-trade policy of the nineteenth century operated very unfavourably to Indian industry and trade. Few attempts were made by the British Government in India to develop the industries and trade of the country. But the last two World Wars gave a great impetus to industry and trade in India. Cotton and Textile industry, Iron and Steel industry, Jute, Coal, Petroleum, Gold, Manganese, Silk, Paper, Cement, etc., are the chief industries of India. Though to-day capital is shy, labour is insufficient and industrial and technical education is defective, Indian industries have progressed with wonderful rapidity.

4. *Education.* Seeds for western education were sown during the British rule. Many universities and colleges were set up on the western model. Western literature, science, politics, economics, history and other branches of learning have been introduced in Indian educational institutions which have been established all over the country.

Legacies of the British Rule

The British rule of nearly two centuries has left certain gifts to India. These gifts are as follows :

1. *Organisation of a vast administrative machinery.* During the time of the East India Company, a great administrative machinery had been gradually built up, the foundations of which were laid by Cornwallis. The period that followed the Mutiny witnessed the growth and development of this administrative machinery, both at the centre and in the provinces. The great all-India services, the I. C. S., the Indian Police, the Indian Audit and Account Service, the Indian Medical Service, the Indian Education Service and the great provincial services (particularly Revenue and Judicial Services) created an administrative machinery that shouldered the heavy burden of governing four hundred million people which no government actually faced before. Such a vast machinery felt itself competent enough to deal not only with the work of government on a large scale,

but also with famine, plague, food, means of transport and communications, agricultural projects, etc. Law was administered under an enlightened and comprehensive system of jurisprudence. The settlement and assessment of lands and the Government demands from the ryots were clearly defined. In fact, for a hundred years India had enjoyed a peaceful administration, though from the point of view of organisation for national welfare, the British Government's work fell far short of legitimate expectation. It followed a system of veiled commercial and economic exploitation that drained the wealth from India.

2. *The growth of popular political institutions.* Credit goes to the British government for the establishment and growth of popular political institutions. They have fostered the conception of national State in India. In 1853 Legislative Council was set up and later enlarged in 1861 to include some nominated members. With the Minto-Morely reforms the provincial legislative councils began to reflect popular opinion and provided a most valuable training ground in parliamentary work. The Montagu-Chelmsford reforms took it a step further by introducing the principle of direct election for democracy in the provinces and the centre and partial responsibility in provincial government known as diarchy. Later on, by the Government of India Act 1935 the provinces became autonomous.

Besides this, Lord Ripon's reforms of local self-government laid the foundation of local and municipal self-government which provided ample training for democratic and self-governing institutions in higher spheres.

3. *Unification of India.* One of the most notable gifts of the British rule was the unification of India. After the mutiny the British set afoot a conscious process of unification the main aim of which 'was not merely to secure the effective exercise of British authority in Indian states, but weld the whole of India into one country.' Railway, post, telegraph and telephone, currency, salt administration, import and export duties, income tax and defence-measures were the main external forms through which this unity was achieved. By their doctrine of paramountcy the British reduced the independence of the Indian

States to an absolute and open dependence on the British power. Deposition of some of the Indian princes by the British Government, the assumption of the Imperial title by Queen Victoria and the three successive Imperial Durbars held at Delhi clearly demonstrated to the world the glorious achievement of this unity.

4. *Universal Peace.* Another important gift of the English to India is universal peace or freedom from foreign danger and internal disorder. A peace so profound and spreading over extensive territory had never before been seen in India. It is said that it was the peace of grave. But such a peace is very valuable for national growth. The English have completed and carried to perfection the task undertaken by the great Mughal Emperor, Akbar, but reversed by the dissolution of the Mughal Empire.

5. *Restoration of our contact with the outer world.* The English have restored our contact with the outer world. Sir J. N. Sarkar rightly observes that 'the English have admitted us to the entire outside world, not only in Asia, but in all other continents as well ; and they have admitted the rest of the world to us, in a degree not dreamt of under Muslim rule. India has now been switched on to the main currents of the great moving world outside,' and made to vibrate with political, economic, social and cultural changes. An isolated self-contained life is no longer possible even for the remotest Indian villages.

6. *Homogeneity in people.* The uniformity of the British administration and the subsequent universal peace 'have been tending to fuse the various races and creeds of India into one homogeneous people and to bring about social equality and community of life and thought which are the necessary basis of nationality.' Under the British rule people of various races living in India for centuries together felt oneness and resolved for their political emancipation.

7. *Modernisation of Indian Society.* Another great gift of the British is the modernisation of the Indian society. The modern western social practices, customs, manners, dresses, etc., are due to the British rule.

8. *The new spirit of progress.* The direct action of the State and the indirect examples of the British people and the

contact with the western peoples have infused a spirit of progress into Indians. The best Indian thinkers now feel grave discontent with the present social, political, religious and economic set up. They are eager to translate their progressive ideas into action and are endeavouring to make our State and administration, society and religion, education and industry, life and thought better and still better. Our best thinkers and most effective leaders are opposed to the oriental passivity and fatalism ; their gaze is fixed forward and they accepted the principle of progress in practice. It has resulted in the increased efficiency and purity of administration, and formation of several associations of social service and economic regeneration.

9. *Revival in Arts.* A notable achievement of the British rule was in the field of arts. In 1860 Alexander Cunningham was appointed the first Director of Archaeology and later on Fergusson has written his famous work describing the magnificent architectural monuments of India. These two factors paved the path for revival of Indian interest in Arts. The appointment of Dr. Hultz as first eminent epigraphist to the Government of India was the beginning of the great work of reclamation of Indian history. The disciphering of the scripts of ancient India and the official search for old inscriptions and documents all over the country and their publication provided India the first corpus of source—material from which her history was constructed. It soon created among Indians a historical sense, a pride in their achievements and nationality. The story of the great ages of the Mauryas, the Guptas, the Vakatakas, the Chalukyas, the Pallavas and the Rashtrakutas of Indian history was recovered to us by the devoted labours of many European scholars who were in the service of the British Government in India. Our Indian history was thus recovered under the British.

Indian Buddhism, its profound philosophy and Pali literature were brought to light again by the European scholars. Panikkar observes that 'even the revival of Sanskrit studies on modern lines in India is due largely to the activities of the British Government and the scholars patronised by them. The Queen's College at Banaras was the first serious attempt to teach

Sanskrit in a systematic way to young India.' It was through the good translations of European scholars that the great religious classics of India—the Vedas, the Sutras, the Upanishads, the famous Epics and the Dharamsastras like those of Manu and Baudhayana have been made available to a much wider circle of people in India than ever before.

In the field of architecture Indians have been completely ignorant of the rich heritage of their country. Ellora, Ajanta, Bagh and Mahabalipuram meant nothing to Indians in the beginning of the nineteenth century ; nor had the magnificent and charming sculptures of Elephanta, Sanchi, Bharhut, Amrawati, Mathura and the temples of Orissa or the Chola bronzes any significance for Indians. They had become strangers to their own inheritance. "Hindu Stuart" was perhaps the first European to appreciate the beauty and charm of Indian sculpture. In due time, the taste spread first among the European critics before India awoke to her own artistic treasures. It is to such men as Cunningham, Havell, Coomarswamy, Fergusson and Marshall that Indians owe revival of their artistic sense. These are undoubtedly great achievements to the credit of Britain. All this brings us to the new aspect of our history—Renaissance.

RENAISSANCE [1]

Renaissance or reawakening marks the nineteenth century of Indian History. But the Indian Renaissance is not like the European Renaissance, a return to India of the past ages. "It is the attempt of a reawakened national spirit to explore a new creative impulse of self-expression that shall give the spiritual force for a magnificent reshaping and reconstructing. Indian Renaissance therefore is the rejuvenation of Indian cultural life that puts on a new garb without completely being adrift from old moorings." The ancient Indian culture provided the basis on which modern renascent India has been constructing a magnificent edifice. Thus Indian Renaissance

[1] *Indian Renaissance* by C. F. Andrews ; *Renascent India* by H. C. E. Zacharias ; *Religious and Social Reform* by M G. Ranade ; *Renaissance of Hinduism* by S. R. Sharma ; *The Vision of India* by S. Mitra.

has been essentially a matter of spirit producing striking changes in the realm of religion, society and culture along with a demand for national regeneration. A new self-consciousness in many walks of life has come to the surface. The soul of India is unfolding itself and India is shedding her shackles of the past. The rapid evolution of modern India is but an aspect of the Indian Renaissance that commenced in the nineteenth century. This Renaissance has profoundly stirred the Indian soul to its very depths and produced far-reaching remarkable changes in several spheres of Indian life. In fact, modern India owes every thing to the Renaissance.

'No reformation,' remarks E. B. Havell, 'is possible without renaissance' and it may safely be added that no radical changes or revolution in any broad policy or plan can be effected except on the basis of a social and religious reformation and an extensive nation-wide cultural renaissance. In India Renaissance was followed by reformation movements all over the country. It paved the path for national regeneration. During the later half of the nineteenth century many spheres of the Indian life were permeated with the spirit of renaissance and reformation. In the eighteenth century India had degenerated considerably. Indian religion became a bundle of superstitions, society had grown rotten at its very core and culture appeared like a pool of stagnant water. In the nineteenth century many directed their efforts consciously towards the general redemption of India from this all round nation-wide degeneration and degradation. Broadly speaking these efforts are designated as Indian Renaissance. The spirit of Renaissance and the subsequent reformation movements have been comprehensively affecting almost all departments of national life. The spirit of re-awakening, revival and recreation spread from sphere to sphere of national life. It affected profoundly society, religion, literature, industries, crafts and politics. In fact, there have been new developments in religious, social and political life, new trends in the realm of education, literature, fine arts and science. In all these spheres there have been rising in prominence great distinguished persons who have added luster to India. Any progressive nation in the world would have been undoubtedly proud of them.

Sir J. N. Sarkar observes that the Indian Renaissance was at first an intellectual awakening and profoundly influenced our literature, education, thought and art ; in the next succeeding generation it became a moral force and reformed Indian society and religion ; and in the third generation from its commencement it has brought about the economic modernization of India and ultimately the political emancipation.

Condition before Renaissance

Political condition. When the English power first established in India after the Carnatic wars and the battle of Plassey in the middle of the eighteenth century, India had touched the lowest point of moral degradation, political degeneration and weakness. Prof. H. G. Rawlinson remarks that 'general condition of India in the eighteenth century was perhaps the unhappiest in the chequered history of the country.' The break-up of the Mughal Empire caused wide-spread anarchy and misery. Northern India became a scene of plunder and slaughter. The Marathas like a swarm of locusts swept down upon the plains of the North and carried fire and sword in the country side. Predatory bands of Pindaries carried on the evil tradition of raid and slaughter. There was no government worth the name. The disintegration of the Mughal empire drove all powerful, ambitious and brave persons to earn their livelihood by joining the profession of soldiers of fortune or that of dacoits. Consequently there were thousands of mercenary soldiers, eager to serve any prince who would pay them liberally. They had neither deep loyalty nor intense patriotism, nor sound military discipline. In Southern India things were no better. The dissolution of the Sultanates of Bijapur and Golkunda left Deccan an easy victim to the contending but weak authorities. Ceaseless civil wars were fought in the Deccan by the families of the Nizam, the Nawab of Arcot, the royal dynasty of Mysore, the Maratha intruders and masterless vassals. The whole country was ravaged with the wars which denied peace and prosperity to the troubled country. In the territories of the East India Company there was neither settled government nor a regular system of administration. Power was divorced from responsibility with disastrous consequences. Due to Subsidiary

Alliances the native rulers became sensualists. They became notorious for their carelessness and laxity of morals.

Social and religious conditions. In society, after the dissolution of the Mughal Empire, material prosperity had been destroyed, misery and disorder spread far and wide, trade and communication interrupted, culture thrown backward and painting, architecture and other arts and crafts declined by incessant warfare among small States and the incursions of the predatory bands like the Pindaris. The condition of the common people was miserable. 'In social usage, in politics, in the realm of religion and art we had entered the zone of uncreative habit, of decadent traditions and ceased to exercise our humanity.' Normal civilised life among the people was decayed. Indian civilisation and culture had been almost moribund, decadent and effete. It lost its vitality and assimilative tendencies. It had been touching the lowest ebb for over a hundred years from about the middle of the eighteenth century. It was a dark age and consequently nothing of the first rate importance was produced in any Indian language. Almost all indigenous arts languished and disappeared in absence of liberal patronage and several old works of art were lost owing to the ignorance, indifference and carelessness of the people and the rapacity of the foreigners who carried them away from India. All attempts to seek beauty and delight in life were decried.

Reason was absent in the realm of religion which was identified with cults, elaborate meaningless ceremonies and rites, several superstitions, intellectual dogmas and rigid moral codes. Pessimism was developed as a philosophy of life. It bred fatalism, inertia and passivity and developed a truncated life and a narrow vision.

In the closing years of the eighteenth century Indians came in close contact with the Western people—especially the English and the French. The inrush of a totally different civilisation for the time being ended all creative power of Indians in religion, art, science, philosophy and other branches of knowledge. An uncritical lavish admiration for all Western things took possession of the mind of the educated classes in India together with

contempt for things of native origin. There was a recoil against the Indian life as lived by the majority. Perhaps this was the first time when the Indian mind was completely thrown off its balance.

Thus, in the sphere of the social life anarchy and chaos prevailed. There was no safety for life and property. Country side witnessed the scenes of ravages and slaughter by mercenary soldiers of fortune. Agriculture, industry and trade were ruined. The rottenness at the core of the society first made itself felt in the form of military and political weakness. India appeared merely a geographical expression. There was no strong political power and consequently the country could not defend itself against the attacks of the aggressive sea-powers. Wide-spread corruption, inefficiency and treachery disgraced all branches of the public service. Life became dull and dreary and fatalism determined the actions of the people. In the midst of such decay, anarchy and confusion Indian literature, fine arts and even true religion perished. In fact, the old order was dead with nothing to replace it when the English conquest began.

The seed time of new India (approximately 1784-1830). During the period extending from Warren Hastings to Bentinck the old order was dead. India was no longer ruled by the Indians. They were even excluded from the public service. The old Government of the Mughals and the Marathas was completely shattered. The normal social and cultured life had entirely decayed. It was an indispensable operation for the new order, like the burning of the stubble on the reaped field as a good preparation for the next luxuriant crop. The period, following the Governor-Generalship of Lord Cornwallis (1786) was the seed time for new India. At the end of this period, that is Lord William Bentinck's time (1835), Indians began to assert themselves for their rights. They began to guide in a responsible way the thoughts of their countrymen, shape the national life and participate in the Government of their country. They commenced the protestant movement in the realm of religion, and new trends in the field of literature. But these Indians of new breed drew their inspiration and power not from

the East but from the West. They had acquired English education and complete grasp of the Western thought. They were fairly well acquainted with the reason and sciences of the West and therefore properly equipped for the work of the modern age. Now India passed from the medieval to modern age. It was the lovely dawn of a new era, the commencement of new India. The period that followed is noted for the extraordinary outburst of intellectual activity and a radical transformation in India's religion and society. It was the beginning of Indian Renaissance.

Causes of the Renaissance. The following causes prepared the ground for the Renaissance :—

1. *Advent of the British.* The political rottenness of India enabled the British to establish their foot-hold in India. With their political and territorial extension there was the economic expansion. The industrial revolution and the immense growth in commerce, wealth and power which accrued to Britain from the adoption and development of new mechanical appliances were of major significance to Britain. The tremendous improvement of communication through the steamship, the railway, the telegraph, telephone and later on the radio and aeroplane facilitated travel and commerce. Its extensive monopoly of the new machines for industrial and manufacturing concerns gave Britain an enormous advantage in both the economic and political field. Being properly equipped with these new appliances, the armies and navies of Great Britain made short work of the opposition of the Indians who did not possess them. This political supremacy and economic superiority of the British coupled with their high notion of Western civilisation and culture enabled them to give a rude shock to the old Indian order which was crumbling fast all over the country. Gradually the age-old conceptions and systems began to yield place to new ones of the West. Moreover, the British and their strong imperialism in India provided administrative uniformity and established peace and political unity in the midst of innumerable other discordent elements. All this paved the way for the nation-wide reawakening.

2. *Contact with the outside world specially with the West.* The

close and intimate contact with the West, effected through the advent of the British, the exertions of the well-known educationists like David Hare, enthusiastic missionaries like Carey, and experienced administrators like Macaulay, brought about a radical change in the political, social and religious outlook of the Indians. The contact with Europe, the U. S. A. and Japan revealed to Indians a panorama of immense possibilities in every walk of life and roused the Indian intelligensia for creative spirit.

3. *English Education.* The extensive spread of the English education specially through the medium of schools and colleges has gone a long way in tansforming the ideas and mentality of the Indians. The English education broke the intellectual isolation of the Indian mind and quickly brought it into close contact with the science, literature, philosophy, economics, politics and history of the West. Consequently there appeared a great mental expansion similar to that which the nations of Europe experienced when the classical learning was revived there during the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries. An entirely new world of ideas and plans revealed itself to the admiring and wondering gaze of the young Indian students in educational and social institutions. In place of the extravagant mythical geography, religion of superstitions and rituals, legendary history, tyrannical monarchy and pseudo-science with which they had been familiar came sober and correct ideas about the configuration of the earth, new progressive social and political ideas of the West, rise and fall of the nation-states and unalterable laws of nature and science. All this served to awaken in Indians a keen desire for national regeneration on the basis of the best in the past. In fact, Indian Renaissance began with the study of English literature, modern philosophy and science.

4. *The early Christian Missionaries.* The nineteenth century witnessed a Christian missionaries movement from Europe, Canada and the United States unequalled in the history of Christianity. Thousands of missionaries, Roman Catholic and Protestant, inspired and impelled by a great revival of Christianity, carried their faith to India and at a number of points in education, medicine and various other forms of philan-

throphy as well as religion, touched the culture of the country. They set up many hospitals and schools in India. Both in the Government and missionary schools Indians had new Western education. Along with the new Western knowledge came the fierce attacks of the early Christian missionaries on Hinduism and Hindu society. The zealous Christian missionaries who never failed to point their fingers of scorn at ancient Hindu religious and social institutions were educators as well as crusaders in India. They established many English schools and colleges. They not only imported freely the new secular knowledge but also taught systematically Christianity as the only true religion in the world. As a result of this a thorough going scepticism or a partial leaning towards Christianity for the time being was produced in the minds of the educated middle classes. Many were drifting towards Christianity and some distinguished persons like M. Madhusudan Datt had embraced it. But in the long run vigorous activities of the missionaries and their vehement criticism of Hindu religion and society served to rouse Hinduism from its slumber. The innate vitality of Hinduism began to assert itself. Innumerable religious movements like Bramha Samaj, Arya Samaj, Ramkrishna Mission, Radha Swami Satsang, etc. appeared.

5. *Indian Press and Literature.* Indian press and literature acted as very powerful stimulants for the Renaissance. Monumental works were written and published. Ancient heritage of India was discovered through the efforts of a group of Europeans who keenly devoted themselves to the study of Indian history and literature and published their works. Many Western scholars and art-critics through their praise-worthy works aroused in Indians the consciousness of the true value of the fine arts of India. Various newspapers and periodicals were started and they not only brought Indians into close contact with the external world but also made them aware of the political, economic and social ills of India. They were roused to the sense of great responsibility to solve the numerous problems that the country was facing. All this smoothed the path for the progress of the Indian Renaissance.

The above-mentioned elements stirred the people and roused

them from the slumber of ages. It was the beginning of Renaissance. "A critical outlook on the past and new aspirations for the future marked the new awakening. Reason and judgement took the place of faith and belief; superstition yielded to sciences, immobility was replaced by progress and zeal for reform of proved abuses, over-powered age-long apathy and inertia and a complacent acquiescence in whatever was current in society. The traditional meaning of the '*Sastras*' was subjected to critical examination and new conceptions of morality and religion remodelled the orthodox beliefs and habits."[1] The new spirit and ideas, at first confined to a small group of people, gradually spread among the larger sections of the people and ultimately their influence reached the masses.

General Features of the Indian Renaissance

1. *Different revivalist movements.* In the beginning Renaissance led to the repudiation of Indian values and slavish imitation of all that the West stood for. It seems that the influence of the West in all spheres of life has been so overwhelming that Indians have lost their own and became 'sedulous apes'. They were becoming Europeans in everything except the colour. There was an extreme dirft towards Western ideas and things. This may be called 'progressive group'. It freely and liberally borrowed from European ideals of life and sociological, political and Marxian theories of the West and endeavoured to lead India along the paths quite at variance with those of Indian culture and civilisation. Such a state of things roused in due course a strong reaction. Consequently a spirit of revival commenced and everything savouring of the past was supported whole-heartedly, welcomed warmly and honoured enthusiastically. It was a defensive mechanism against extreme reaction. It was symbolised in the religious messages of Dayanand Saraswati, Ramkrishna Paramhansa and Vivekanand. It may be designated as the 'revivalist group'. It stood wholeheartedly for the dogmatic acceptance of all that the old and past stood for. Between the two movements arose a new one. It

An Advanced History of India by R. C. Majumdar and others, p. 812.

sought compromise between the two. It was led by Raja Ram Mohan Roy and propagated by Rabindranath Tagore, Dr. Annie Besant and Ram Krishna Mission. It looked upon the past with a clear and self-discerning eye, admiring the past where praise was due, criticising the old where it was essential and learning new things from the West to satisfy the demands of the people and needs of the times. This 'middle group' aimed to assimilate the best and enduring features of European culture with those of Indian without eliminating or discarding the essential ingredients of the Indian culture and civilisation. Consequently the group produced intellectual giants like Rabindranath Tagore in literature, Swami Vivekanand in religion, Abanindranath Tagore in painting, Radhakrishnan in philosophy and Gandhi and Nehru in politics.

But the first decades of the twentieth century witnessed the birth of another unique spiritual movement in India. It was led by Shri Aurobindo. It interpreted Indian Renaissance as the rebirth of the soul of India into a new body of enthusiasm and energy, a new form of its innate and ancient spirit. It lays emphasis on the greater and nobler action of the spiritual motive in every sphere of Indian life. It aims on more magnanimous achievements and higher activity which ends in the discovery, expression and manifestation of the Divine Self in human being. The mental, the emotional and the aesthetic parts and inborn potentiality of human beings are to be unfolded and developed fully for their greater satisfaction and finer nature of human beings. In other words this movement has found "in all round spirituality the master-key not only to unlock the treasures of the past but also to remould the present on the basis of a true appraisal both of the East and the West."

2. *Revival of Hinduism.* At the first flush of the Renaissance ardent youths of the country became utterly indifferent to Hinduism. They discarded it and rejected its dogmas and rituals. Soon they were attracted towards Christianity. Because the inner spirit of Hinduism was neither taught nor its vitality and spiritual force explained to them. They could find nothing but unreason, superstitions and repulsiveness in the rituals of Hinduism as practised in their time. The reform of such a

religion seemed an impossibility to them. Consequently many highly intelligent and educated Bengalis of the pre-Mutiny days like Krishna Mohan Banerji, Lal Behari De and Govind Dutt (the father of the famous poetess Toru Dutt) embraced Christianity. But before this tendency could spread all over the country it was arrested by religious movements aiming at the revitalisation of Indian religious and social life The Brahma Samaj of Bengal, the Prarthana Samaj of Bombay, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society and the Ramkrishna Mission are the most outstanding of these movements, a detailed account of which will be given later on.

As a result of these religious movements the innate vitality of Hindu religion with its great and glorious past began to assert itself. "At first the revived Hinduism was on its defence, rather cautious and timid in maintaining its position and inclined to compromise with the enemy. But soon it took the offensive, marched forward and even entered the hostile camp and asserted in ringing tones its right to live as one of the civilising influences of mankind." This was new Hinduism—Hinduism that has been clearly the fruit of the Renaissance.

On account of these religious movements "there arose in the period a number of reformers, teachers, saints and scholars who have purified Hinduism by denouncing some of its later accretions, separated its essentials from non-essentials, confirmed its ancient truths by their own experience and have even carried its message to Europe and America. They have been able to view their religion apart from the mythological, ritualistic and sociological forms in which it was embedded. They successfully interpreted Hinduism and its religious philosophy and main principles independent of Indian caste system, mythology, external rites and ceremonies. It was due to all this that today Hinduism is as fresh, vitalizing and vigorous as it was in any of the periods previously. The old fear that Hinduism might be over-shadowed by Christianity or eclipsed by Western civilisation and culture exists no longer. It has successfully outlived the Christian missionary propaganda of modern age as it survived the Muslim religious persecution of the medieval periods and the religious schism caused by Buddhism and

Jainism in ancient times. It is now capable enough to meet any of the modern religions of the world on equal footing as their friend and ally in a common cause. "If the world in its present distracted state needs spiritual message and looks for a light to guide its footsteps in the darkness that has enveloped its path, renascent India is in a position to give it through the greatest of her prophets."

3. *Social Reforms.* As a result of the religious movements and their leaders like Brahma Samaj and Raja Ram Mohan Roy, the Prarthana Samaj and M. G. Ranade, the Arya Samaj and Dayanand Sarswati, the Ramkrishna Mission and Vivekanand, Shri Aurobindo, Maharshi Raman and Mahatma Gandhi, our social system underwent a great transformation. It brought about a great upheaval in Hindu society, promoted the growth of wider social and religious outlook and stimulated the development of individual and organised efforts for speedy social reforms. The new Hinduism with great pleasure began to serve in many ways the suffering humanity and minimise its miserable plight. Many Hindus directed their activities with the missionary zeal towards the social and religious regeneration of India. Today thousands of women and men are working enthusiastically in a noble religious spirit not only in the Ramkrishna Mission, the Arya Samaj institutions, the Indian Section of the Theosophical Society but also in innumerable fields of the social services inaugurated by Gandhiji, Acharya Vinoba Bhave and others ; social regeneration and reform formed a pretty large part of the present Renaissance in India. In fact, the movement of Renaissance commenced with the social reforms. Consequently the *Sati-system* and the practice of infanticide had disappeared. They have been incredible things of the past ages. Women are being educated freely and liberally. They are given equal rights and privileges with men. Child marriages have been declared illegal, widow marriages have been made possible. They have been legalised. Monogamy has been the order of the day and polygamy has been the order of the day and polygamy has become extremely rare. *Parda* is a dead custom and social equality between the two sexes is now well establish-ed. Women have entered the economic field and they have

taken to several professions. Today many of them are holding posts of trust and responsibility. If some of them have been active in the political field, a few are distinguished leaders of thought. Foreign travel is no longer discarded. Now it has become very common. Radical changes are being introduced in the social institutions. Inter-caste marriages have been performed and the ban on inter-dining lifted. Many social taboos are losing their rigidity. The reactionary features of the Hindu society have been disintegrated. Attempts are being made to wipe out social evils like drinking, illiteracy, poverty etc. The rigidity of the caste system is dissolved and thanks to Mahatma Gandhi that the Demon of untouchability has been over-thrown. Thus the Renaissance has enabled India to pay more attention to life on earth and promote the general material and moral prosperity of the people. It has made Indians conscious of their social ills and goaded them to uproot these evils. It has rescued Indians from a philosophy of fatalism and listless passivity which had taken a strong hold of them in the preceding period of great decadence.

4. *Recovery of Indian History.* The Renaissance not only awakened and fortified the sense of the Hindu greatness, but brought the glories of the Indian history to light. The slow and patient labour of many European scholars helped a good deal in the reconstruction of the lost story of India's greatness. The work of archaeologists, epigraphists, numismatists and art-critics like James Fergusson, Dr. Buhler, Dr. Fleet, Percy Brown, Sir John Marshall and Dr. Ananda Coomarswamy revealed the glory of India's numerous ancient monuments scattered all over the country. They made Indians take pride in their past history. Gradually the Hindus were awakened to the sense of their greatness. They came to know that they had to their credit achievements in every sphere through many centuries of the past and they could no longer be conquered and subjugated by foreign imperialist people. The names of great monarchs of Indian history, like Asoka, Samudragupta, Harsh, etc. whose memory had died out long ago, were brought to light. The discovery of rich and prosperous Indus Valley civilisation, the deciphering of Asoka's inscriptions, the history of the religious

achievements, and the story of establishing empires, of the extension of Indian civilisation and culture across the seas, of the unique world-famous monuments of architecture like Borobudur, Angkor Vat etc. gave to Indians a sense of national pride which they had lost for many centuries. Renowned historians like Jadu Nath Sarkar, R. Bhandarkar, Har Prasad Shastri, M. G. Ranade, Rajwade, Sardesai, V. A. Smith, Macdonell, Rapson, Rawlinson, Col. Tod, Grant Duff, Elphinston, Lanepool and history societies and Research Institutions like the Bhandarkar Oriental Institute and the *Bharat Itihas Sansodhan Mandal* not only intensified Indian national pride in the history of India but smoothed the way for reconstructing the past history of India's greatness and glories.

5. *The recovery of India's ancient literature.* The Renaissance enabled Indians to recover their ancient literature—Vedic, Buddhist and Jain. The Vedas and their commentaries had almost totally disappeared from India, the land of the Aryans, where no one could interpret them rightly and explain them correctly. Worst of all none had the fortune to possess a complete authentic manuscript of the text. Similarly for a thousand years Lord Buddha had been forgotten and the great literatures of the Buddhism in Pali and Sanskrit were totally neglected and ignored. It were the English who printed the Vedic and the Buddhist literatures of India and revealed them to Indians. The enterprise and scholarship of Europeans restored to Indians the ancient literature of Buddhism from Nepal, Tibet, China, Central Asia and Japan. Many English, French and German scholars had sent the lost and forgotten Buddhist works to European countries and they have made them available to Indians in the printed book forms.

European scholars who cultivated the study of Sanskrit literature opened the eyes of Indians to the great rich heritage that their ancestors had bequeathed to them. It was the enthusiasm of European scholars like Sir Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones, Colebrooke, Wilson, Muir, Monier Williams, Max Muller and others for the culture of India that provided the first great impetus to the modern study of classics in India. They did much to introduce ancient Sanskrit classics to the western

world. Wilkins translated the Gita, Jones edited the *Shakuntala* and several other Sanskrit plays and works. Colebrooke wrote extensively on various aspects of Indology and edited numerous Sanskrit texts such as the Grammar of Panini and Hitopadesh. Glassenhap of Germany wrote commentaries on many Sanskrit philosophical texts including one of Madhvacharya. Stanislaw F. Michalski, the great Sanskrit scholar of Poland, devoted his whole life to the study of the Sanskrit and ancient Indian literature. Under the inspiration of Max Muller, a great German scholar in England, sacred books of India were translated and published and Indian philosophy was studied with keen interest in the West. All this restored India's classics to Indians, enabled the new middle classes in India to know of nobler and higher things in their own thought, helped to rouse the world's interest in India and provided a great impetus to the sense of nationalism among Indians.

6. *Growth of Indian Vernacular literature.* A significant feature of the Renaissance was the rapid growth of India's vernacular literatures. At first there was the flowering of certain versatile genius and it was followed by the phenomenal growth of the vernacular literatures. Bengal took the lead in this sphere. The first great distinguished writers in Bengali were Ram Mohan Roy, Akshay Kumar Dutta, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, Devendra Nath Tagore, Madhusudan Dutta, Rajnarain Bose, Dwijendralal Roy and Bankim Chandra. There arose around these a class of men. They formed a kind of seed-bed for the future creative genius, accomplished persons of fine critical ability and appreciative temper. They were men of scholarly habits, learned in many branches of knowledge, arts as well as sciences; in short men, not only of culture but of original culture. All these writers were a prelude to the rise of Rabindranath Tagore who has contributed to all aspects of culture and literature—prose, poetry, drama, novel, essay, short story, music, painting, dancing etc. He has been the acknowledged king of literature. So extensive and deep-rooted was his influence in the realm of literature that the new literary impulse in Andhra, Gujrat, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab has emanated from him in greater or less degree. Mohammed

Iqbal of Urdu-Persian, Premchand of Hindi and Sarat Chandra Chatterji of Bengali have been other most distinguished figures of the Indian literature. They introduced new styles, new technique and secularised the themes in the realm of prose.

As regards the different Indian vernacular literatures it is a matter of great pride that the work of centuries have been crowded into a few decades in the evolution of modern literatures of India. Some of the vernaculars were unimportant as vehicles of modern expression till the beginning of the nineteenth century. After the growth of English education they began to develop considerably. Before the Renaissance all the vernacular literatures dealt with religious subjects. Mythological or heroic narratives figured very much. Prose was hardly existing. Expression was through poems and songs. Poetry was very popular. It was the only medium used except for pithy saying and business correspondence. Worst of all, there was an absolute lack of good, standard and suitable vernacular text books for schools and colleges. Even for adults story, novel and history of the type popular in Europe for centuries before 1850 were unknown in India. The Renaissance provided a strong stimulus to the vernacular literatures to progress. All branches of literature were developed considerably. As a result of the Renaissance Indian languages have become both simpler and harder at the same time for the expression of modern thought. Not only their vocabulary has been immensely enlarged but they have gained flexibility, variety and naturalness of movement. Their old classical pedantry and stiffness have disappeared. At the earlier stage of the Renaissance a prose style was gradually evolving when the Christian missionaries translated the Bible into Indian vernaculars and propagated their religion through the spoken languages of the people. The establishment of the printing press, the publication and circulation of the Indian newspapers and the study of western literatures further contributed to the growth of new styles and evolution of literature. Numerous writers, poets and literary figures rose in prominence. They showed clarity combined with beauty of expression and flight of imagination. Many of them were noted for the strength and purity of their diction.

Various aspects of vernacular literature were changed and improved considerably. The Indian drama has been completely transformed since the middle of the nineteenth century. It closely imitated the modern European drama. It gained a good deal from the adoption of many European features. In fact, in novel and drama Indians have been wholesole borrowers from the West. It is from the West that they have taken the art of criticism in the realm of literature. Similarly other aspects of vernacular prose literature were shaped on the Western model. If the Indian Press has considerably popularised the vernacular literatures, the study of the Western literature have secularised them. Before the commencement of the Renaissance, the themes in Indian literature were borrowed from scriptures and epics. They were mainly mythological and religious, but now they are reflecting many sides of life. They are closely related to all aspects of human life.

The influence of Europe has also enriched Indian literature by developing a keen interest and deep regard for the historic past of India and by kindling the spirit of patriotism among the Indians. It awakened sense of nationality and has undoubtedly added a noble and glorious element to the Indian literatures. The following examples will make it clear. The novels of famous Bengali writer Bankim Chandra and the plays of well-known dramatist Dwijendralal drew in their inspiration from Indian history. The songs of Bharati, Tagore, works of famous Hindi poets Bharatendu Harishchandra and Maithlisharan Gupta and the early songs of celebrated Urdu poet Iqbal were intensely nationalist. Bengali acquired the standard of a modern literature with a comprehensive outlook on life. It became rich in its varied aspects and produced writers, poets and dramatists of world significance. It is a matter of great pride that Hindi, Gujrati, Marathi, Urdu and the great Dravidian languages of the South—Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Kanarese—had equally important developments in all branches of literature. Consequently the best literature of India had gained an international status and a universal appeal. The healthy growth of these different languages led to an integration of linguistic nationalities in India. However, it may be remarked

that this development fostered the fissiparous tendencies of particularism which ultimately led to the demand of linguistic provinces or States. Probably it may prove detrimental to the national solidarity.

7. *The growth of scientific spirit of research.* One very striking feature of the Indian Renaissance is manifested in the scientific spirit of research and discovery.

Since the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal in 1784 a large number of European as well as Indian scholars have been devoting themselves earnestly to the work of research, excavation, exploration and discovery. They have also concentrated their attention on study. Their labours have produced marvellous results. The works of art-critics and archaeologists inspired many to cultivate the spirit of research. The Ancient Monument Preservation Act of Lord Curzon provided an impetus to the cause of study and research. Under the guidance of the Archaeological Department of the Government of India and a few other research institutions and History Associations valuable scientific excavations, which have considerably modified the views of scholars about the ancient history of India, have been undertaken on the pre-historic sites like Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Nalanda, Kaushambi, Hastinapur etc. Numerous museums and good centres of study, research and education have been established at various places. Much attention is being devoted to them. Striking progress in the study of science and philosophy have been made and independent institutions are established for the purpose. India has contributed considerably to the general advancement in the realm of modern science. The discovery of Shri Ramanujam in the field of pure mathematics and those of Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose in another branch of science were the real and substantial contributions of the new India in the world of knowledge. Now an Indian name is associated with Einstein's Theory of Relativity. There are some renowned Indians among the luminaries in the realm of Physics and Chemistry. The well-known scientist Einstein's epoch-making work on mathematical Physics is now mentioned with that of S. N. Bose. Sir C. V. Raman and Dr. Meghnad Shah made remarkable and outstanding contributions in

Physics, while P. C. Ray, J. C. Ghose and S. S. Bhatnagar were well-known all the world over for what they have achieved in the spheres of chemical sciences. S. C. Ray and B. Sahani have also earned a wide reputation for their prominent discoveries. In the realm of astronomy S. Chandrasekhar stands as a most distinguished and notable person. Today he has become an international scientist due to his original work in Steller Dynamics. A good deal of attention is also devoted to the philosophical studies through the inspiration of distinguished teachers and philosophers like Sir B. N. Seal, S. Radhakrishnan and others. The scholarly works of Radhakrishnan and his world-wide tours and lectures have enormously increased the interest of European and American countries in Indian thought. His brilliant and masterly exposition of the philosophical, religious and cultural ideals of India has undoubtedly made a stirring appeal to the mind of modern man. And all this has considerably raised India in the estimation of the world.

8. *Fine arts.* The spirit of Renaissance has also produced a finer appreciation and better cultivation of the fine arts such as painting, music, dancing, architecture etc. A new era of considerable importance has dawned upon India through the re-awakening of her art consciousness. The aesthetic eye of man has been opened to the immense splendour of ancient Indian art.

(*a*) *Painting.* Sister Nivedita, Havell and Percy Brown are among those from outside India who caught the true spirit of India's artistic and masterly expression and revealed it to the admiring gaze of humanity. A striking and stirring revival of this spirit has been observed in the works of many modern Indian artists. Havell and Abanindranath Tagore laid the foundations of the new, spiritual and creative art of painting. Havell had successfully grasped the essential principles of ancient and medieval Indian art by his aesthetic temperament and innate sympathies for Indian culture and civilisation. Consequently he had encouraged the revival of Indian painting and he worked hard for it. Among Indians the influence of Abanindra Nath was decisive. It revolutionised the Indian painting. It was the Indian Society of Oriental Art, founded by Abanindra

Nath Tagore, that started a new art movement to revive the ancient art traditions of India. Abanindra Nath Tagore together with the group of his faithful disciples Surendra Gangoli, Nandlal Bose and Asit Kumar Haldar have done a great deal to further the cause of reawakening in painting. Other distinguished artists of the period who earned international fame are Abdur Rahman Chaghatai and Amrit Sher Gil. A great deal of credit goes to Dr. Rabindranath Tagore and Dr. A. K. Coomarswamy for the renaissance in fine arts. If Rabindra Nath Tagore had inspired a group of artists, Dr. A.K. Coomarswami had done much to preach the majesty, splendour and glory of Indian art and had completely revolutionised the western attitude towards Indian art. Besides this, the Schools of Arts in Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow and Indore have been throwing new talent in the revival of painting. The Bombay School of Arts has tried to develop a new style by applying western technique and methods to the current Indian conditions.

(*b*) *Architecture and sculpture.* As with painting there has been a revival of sculpture and architecture also in two ways—firstly buildings constructed by the indigenous 'master builders' to be found chiefly in the Indian states, particularly in Rajasthan and Madhya Bharat, and secondly structures based on imitations of the western models. The well-known Assembly Hall in New Delhi and the Victoria Memorial in Calcutta belong to the buildings of the second group.

(*c*) *Music and dancing.* A new spirit in the cultivation of music and dancing has also been abroad in India. The Sangit Samaj of Calcutta and the Jnanottejak Mandir of Bombay roused a new awakening in the realm of music. Pandit P. N. Bhatkhande, a member of the Jnanottejak Mandir, inaugurated new education in music and infused a new spirit for music among the people. He organised a music school at Gwalior and later on the first All India Music Conference at Baroda in 1916. Another distinguished person for the revival in the work of music was Vishnu Digambar. His notable disciples have spread all over Northern India and Bombay. Rabindranath Tagore has also revived Indian music. He has made his own contributions to it

by flexibility, varied compositions and accompaniments. For the detailed scientific study and practice of Indian music new societies, institutions and schools have sprung up in Bombay, Poona, Calcutta, Madras, Baroda, Delhi, Lucknow, Gwalior, Indore, Jaipur etc.

In the realm of dancing also there has been a great reawakening. If Dilip Kumar Roy by his brilliant exposition and masterly demonstration of Indian music in the west won admirers in the western countries, Uday Shankar by his charming and scientific dances not only in India but abroad also revived a keen interest in Indian dances. Eminent art-critics showered on Uday Shankar rapturous and lavish praises not only for his mastery of the art but also for his marvellous and happy fusion of modern ideas about dancing and music with the traditions and techniques cultivated and built up by India for centuries together. Other famous exponents of the Indian dances are Shrimati Rukmani Devi, Ramgopal, Radha Shriram and Kumari Damyanti Joshi. Earnest efforts are being made to revive indigenous types of dramas and dances in various institutions like the *Prachin Kumari Nritya Sangha of Assam*, *Vishwabharti* of Belpur, the *Kerala Kalamandalam*, *Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan* of Bombay, *Kala-Kshetra* of Madras, etc.

9. *The spirit of industrialisation.* Renaissance fostered a new spirit of awakening in the economic sphere by making the Indians feel keenly the poverty of the masses and industrial backwardness of the country. They began to realise the drawbacks of the economic policy followed by the British Government in India and the great evils of excessive dependence upon agriculture. Industrialisation has been suggested a remedy for this. Consequently a new outlook has been inaugurated in the economic sphere. New elements, new techniques and economic motives are being introduced. As a result of this new spheres of struggle have arisen between capitalism and labour on the one hand and landlords and agriculturists on the other hand. New problems have sprung up in the economic life of the nation. All this has provided fruitful fields for the socialists and communists.

Rise of new middle classes. After the Mutiny of 1857 the

British deliberately prepared a class of quislings. They prepared a table of salutes and a vain dictionary of titles for those Indians who were most loyal to them. Magnificent titles as *Farzand-i-kher-i-daulat-e-Englishia* (the beloved son of the British Empire), *Inder Mahinder* (the supreme lord of lords), *Siphara-e-sultanat* (the shield of the Empire), Khan Bahadur, Rai Bahadur, Knighthood etc. were created by the British Government. They were liberally conferred on the aristocracy and princely order. By these methods the conservative aristocracy was rallied to the British Empire. The princes, business magnets and the great landlords vied with each other to be considered the most loyal among the British subjects. Great rulers and top-ranking officials became petitioners for decorations and high sounding titles from the British Emperor. They felt themselves honoured when empty ranks were conferred on them. Rai Sahibs, Khan Sahibs and Knight Commanders considered themselves to be the pillars of the British Empire. They regarded it as one of the greatest privileges and honours that they could achieve in life. Thus the British endeavoured to shatter the solidarity of the upper classes and the princely order. They created a wide gulf between the masses and the aristocracy. If the aristocracy was thus won over, the British fostered the growth of middle classes which looked upon the British Empire as an opportunity more than a burden. During the medieval ages, the Indian bureaucratic classes—the Kayasthas, the Brahmans, the Khattris, and others—were always dominated by feudal nobility or warrior classes. With the rise of the British Empire the feudal nobility sank in popular estimate and it lost its importance. The Rajas, Maharajas, princes and nawabs in the British provinces had no power left to them. They were simple decorative figures. The warrior classes like Rajputs, Jats, Mewatis etc. fell into discount since in the Indian Armies they had to be content with lower ranks. Therefore, substance, power and influence now passed to those castes from whom the large army of clerks and officials was recruited. When English education spread far and wide the differentiation of these castes from others became very clear. Great lawyers like W. B. Bannerji, Phirozshah Mehta, teachers like Surendranath,

Gokhale, Tilak, Radhakrishnan, administrators like Raja Madhav Rao, T. Raghvacharya, Dutta and journalists like G. Subramanya Iyer, Motilal Ghosh etc. came from these castes. They left their own mark. The liberal professions and the higher officials were also frequently recruited from these classes. Besides the Government service, the only openings then available to them were those of law, medicine, teaching, government service and journalism. These classes being better educated than others, having wider appreciation of the immediate requirements of the nation, more intelligent grasp of the problems of the day and a greater sense of solidarity, began to stand for modern India. They came to be known as middle classes. The old nobility and proud aristocracy, living on their glorious past, began to lose their ground every day. Soon they lost the sympathy of the people, giving chance to middle classes to rise. Western influences poured into India through these classes. Their views were propagated considerably by the Indian press. Panikkar observes that the building of a new India in all spheres except the industrial one was the work of the middle classes. "They were the advocates of new learning and the torch-bearers of new India that was shaping." It were they who fostered the spirit of the Renaissance, encouraged numerous social reforms and organised the nationalist movement. All these will be described in the next chapter.

Effects of the Renaissance

The meaning of the Renaissance, its importance, its causes and various phases—all have been dealt with above. Now we take the opportunity to describe in brief the effects of the Renaissance. They are as follows :—

The Renaissance revitalised all spheres of life and reawakened the nation from the slumber of ages. It brought about a marvellous reawakening and wonderful progress in the realms of politics, society, religion, literature, philosophy, science and industry. The reawakening in the world of politics caused widespread nationalism and created anti-British sentiment. It led to the long freedom struggle. Consequently under the leadership of Dada Bhai Nauroji, Firoz Shah Mehta, Surendranath Bannerji, Gopalkrishna Gokhle, Balgangadhar Tilak, Madan

Mohan Malviya, Sardar Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose, Jawahar Lal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi. India regained her freedom after a prolonged struggle.

The reawakenning in the social sphere transformed entirely the social life of the country. It brought about a great upheaval. At the advent of the British rule there were numerous social evils like the *sati* and *parda* systems, child-marriage, enforced widowhood, devdasi system, illiteracy, untouchability, rigid caste system etc. It led to national degeneration. But the Renaissance removed these social ills. They now began to lose their tyrannical hold on the minds of the Hindus. It smoothed the path for social progress. Reason and scientific judgment took the place of superstition and blind faith. Liberality and independent thinking overpowered rigidity and conservatism. The religious reawakening made Indians realize the wide-spread decadence in the realm of religion. People were entangled in numerous superstitions, meaningless elaborate rituals, expensive ceremonies, rigid traditions, orthodox habits, etc. Nation-wide movements were started to emancipate the country from these evils. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, Keshav Chandra Sen, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Ramkrishna Paramhansa, Swami Vivekanand, Shri Aurobindo, Maharshi Raman and others reinstalled the ancient truths of the country. They remodelled morality and religion. They gave a new divine and spiritual message of India to the materialistic world. Now the Indians began to have an unflinching faith in their religion and strong hope in future. While reasserting the fundamental faith of Hinduism, great emphasis was laid on the principle that "all religions are branches of the same tree, that same sap flows in all of them and that, therefore, mutual toleration is of the utmost importance in all matters effecting religious beliefs and practice". Moreover, the teachings of Hinduism have been adjusted to the scientific thought and the political and social philosophies of the West. Hinduism has been well interpreted in the light of modern scientific thought. Consequently the Hindu philosophy and religion have come home to Indians with a new meaning and a fresh application to the nation's social problems.

A new feeling of unity has dawned. A feeling, that the whole of the Hindu society in all provinces and states has been one community with common temporal and spiritual interests, has begun to grip the minds of the Hindus. The Arya Samaj, the Ramkrishna Mission, the Hindu Mahasabha and even Gandhiji all have been fostering and strengthening this feeling of unity.

Reawakening in the realm of literature led to the study of Sanskrit by western scholars. This stimulated interest in India. Indians came to know the glories of their own literature and history, and therefore they determined to reconstruct their own history and preserve their culture. The western education through the medium of English led to intellectual awakening which was well expressed in the development of Indian vernaculars. Bankimchandra, Rabindranath Tagore, Saradchandra, Premchand, Iqbal, Maithilisharan Gupta, Trimbak Bapuji Thomare, Vireshlingam etc. have enriched the vernacular literatures of India.

The prophets of Renascent India turned attention towards the fine arts of the country. Painting developed a new technique; the old traditions and types in the music and dance have been revived. Music now has become a salient feature of education. In the realm of science Prafulla Chandra Roy, Jagdish Chandra Bose, Shri Nivas Ramanuja, Chandra Shekhar Raman, Meghnad Shah, Birbal Sahani, Shri Krishnan, etc. have revived this self-confidence in the Indians that science is not the monopoly of the western scientists alone. They have developed the spirit of scientific inquiry and research among the Indians.

So far as economic effects are concerned attempts have been made to industrialise India on the basis of scientific inventions and new machinery. Consequently numerous manufacturing concerns were set up, general output was increased and industrialists like Tata, Dalmia, Birla etc. rose in prominence. It introduced in India the western economic theories and new political thought and soon India became the battle-field of conflicting ideologies of socialism, communism, individualism, capitalism, idealism, etc. In fact, this is the legacy of the west to India. The evolution of the Indian culture has been con-

siderably influenced by the western thought in modern age. This brings us to India and the west.

India and the western countries and impact of their culture

The Christian sea-powers in India brought with them western civilisation and culture in the country. It not only introduced many new elements into the Indian cauldron but also disturbed the existing disposition of various forces in Indian society like the last stone which starts an avalanche ; a process of change began, but it has not yet ended and its future no one could yet foresee.

Challenge of the West and its results. In the closing years of the eighteenth century channels of Indian culture were getting dry. The culture of the country had become moribund, decadent and effete. The creative spirit had disappeared in fine arts, literature, science, philosophy and religion. The intellectual life had become dull and sluggish. Knowledge was petrified. Society with all its evil customs was like a pool of stagnant water. The traditional charms of Indian society collapsed. India needed a violent shock and a rude challenge to remedy this state of affairs. This was provided by the people of the Western countries and their culture. It is a mistake to think that this shock, challenge and effect of the West in India were due to the advent of the British. Sometimes the British endeavoured to hinder the healthy influence of the West by reactionary elements. In fact, the western influence in India was the outcome of the forces of time and history, as it happened in China and Japan. In course of time the western influence would have entered India even without the advent of the British.

It was in the closing years of the eighteenth century that Western civilisation and culture challenged all old values and beliefs of India. Consequently old rites and rituals, customs and traditions crumbled. Social, religious, economic and political institutions collapsed at a terrifying pace. The very roots of the national life were very violently shaken. India was literally in the melting pot. When the edifice of Indian culture was collapsing the western culture attempted to super-impose its

structure on Indian soil. It changed the vision and revolutionised those who came into contact with it. Its immediate result was the indiscriminate imitation and adoption of western mode of life and habits. In fact some went so far as to endeavour to build up a new Europe on the soil of India. Fortunately this process was quickly arrested by the forces of the Indian Renaissance which has been already described above. However, western civilisation and culture has left its permanent marks on Indian culture.

The Impact of the western civilisation was very extensive. The advent of Islam influenced chiefly the Hindu princely order, aristocracy and town dwellers. They determined the tendency and not the tone of the social whole. But the revolutionary changes which the western culture initiated did not stop in the towns. They gradually filtered into remote villages in ever widening circles of influence. This process was hastened with wonderful rapidity by the conquest of space and time through improved means of transport and communications which solved easily the problem of distance and immobility. Thus, the influence of the West spread far and wide among all classes of people in towns and villages.

Western influence in education. The first influence of the west was felt in the realm of education. Western culture began to spread through the English education which was commenced by the Christian missionaries and encouraged considerably by the decision of Lord Macaulay and declaration of Lord Hardinge that preference would be given to the knowledge of English in all public services. The western system of education introduced in India the study of western philosophy, sciences, literatures, history, economics, sociology etc. It created literate classes which derived their ideas not from the age-long traditions of the land but from the west. They looked to the west for every aspect of their life and imitated a good deal of the western culture. This had the effect of developing the wide gulf between the educated and the uneducated classes in India. Apart from this, the new literates brought into existence middle classes with their manifold problems and privileges.

The impact of the West on the vernacular literature. The

impact of the West and the English education was keenly felt in the vernacular literatures of India. Contact with European minds benefitted Indians considerably. Through the English language the western literatures were thrown open to Indians and a flood of ideas was let loose. It had an intensely stimulating effect. Before 1919 Indian nationalist leaders received inspiration from the western literature of freedom. They modelled their speeches and articles on the western thought and borrowed a good deal from the British leaders and orators of repute.

Numerous works in the English language provided new trends of thought and action in India. The western literature offered several brilliant specimens in the different branches of literature and Indian writers copied them. The best of the writers of the Indian vernacular literatures have been western in spirit, in outlook, in literary devices, in the choice and treatment of the subjects, though they retained a close connection with the west in the literature and life of ancient India. They represented the spirit of the west clad in a half oriental garb.

The Indian prose literature begins with the translation of English prose works. Our prose writers wrote essays in the light of the western ideology. They imitated western style and theme in their writings. They applied western methods of study to oriental literature. Even Rabindranath Tagore is no exception to this. The Indian drama was considerably influenced by the western drama. The details about the stage and the distinct analysis of the individual and social problems in modern Indian drama are the outcome of the study of the western drama. The style, technique and theme of the western playwriters like Ibson, Galsworthy and Bernard Shaw have been imitated by the Indian writers. The growth of One Act Play in Indian literature is the result of the western literary influence. The works of well-known writers like Laxminarain Mishra, Govinda Pant, Ashka, Premi, Udaishankar Bhatt, Kailashnath Bhatnagar, Seth Govinddas etc. betray the influence of the western drama.

Indian story and novel also were profoundly influenced by the western literature. They were absent in the realm of Indian

literature till the first half of the nineteenth century. With the translation of the western stories and novels original works were also composed. Western theme and style were liberally followed in the original works. In the sphere of criticism western elements were freely adopted.

Like prose, poetry was also considerably influenced. English *Sonnet*, *Ode* and *Blank Verse* were imitated. Madhusudan Datt in Bengali and Ayodhyasingh Upadhyay in Hindi achieved marvellous success in *Blank Verse.* English lyrics were freely followed. In long poems on love and mysticism English thought and style were imitated. In the sphere of essay western models were adopted. Western scholars played prominent role in composing dictionaries and grammars of Indian vernaculars. Christian priests and missionaries set up Indian vernacular press to spread the divine message of the Bible and for learning the Indian vernaculars they wrote their authoritative grammars. Later on the western scholars not only wrote the history of the Indian literatures but established institutions for their rapid evolution and expansion.

Under the influence of the west many Indian vernacular-printing presses were set up and numerous newspapers in Indian languages were started. In 1780 Hickey commenced the publication of the 'Bengal Gazetse' in English. It was followed by the publication of first Indian vernacular newspaper 'Bengal Samachar' in 1816 and the 'Bombay Samachar' in Gujrati in 1822. The first Hindi newspaper the 'Banaras Akhbar' was started in 1845. The newspapers and periodicals of the Indian languages not only brought us into close contact with the numerous countries of the world, but provided opportunities to us to study their literatures and know our political, social, religious and economic evils.

Our ancient language Sanskrit was restored to us through English. The first English man to learn Sanskrit was Charles Wilkins and the person who clearly realised the significance of Sanskrit was William Jones who came to India in 1783 as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court at Calcutta. He founded the Bengal Asiatic Society for the study of the Oriental Literature. The result was that European scholars were encouraged

to take up the study of Sanskrit. It has been said that the years 1828-70 witnessed the flowering of oriental scholarship and the period between 1870-1900 saw the publication and circulation of many Sanskrit works like the Sacred Books of the East in fifty volumes, the Harvard Oriental Series, Trubner's Oriental Series, etc. Wilkins, William Jones, William Hamilton, Colebrooke, Wilson, Williams, James Prinsep, Max Muller and other scholars began to study Sanskrit, edited, translated and published famous works of Sanskrit and thus focussed the attention of the Indians towards the rich heritage of their Sanskrit literature.

West and the Indian Politics. In the sphere of politics the western thought and administration have given us the conception of political unity and constitutional law and revolutionary notions of liberty and equality. Western thoughts have fostered in India the growth of the spirit of deep nationalism. Political consciousness and aggressive patriotism were borrowed from the west and it profoundly affected the course of Indian history. We received inspiration for the intense nationalism from Washington, Cromwell, Mazzini, Garibaldi, Napoleon, etc. Political awakening and growing nationalism unified heterogeneous elements in the country. But the British introduced communalism and separate electorate. It poisoned the national springs. To wipe out these evils we had to partition the country.

The uniformity of the British administration, universal peace, political unity, constitutional development and spread of western political ideas led to an increasing emphasis on democracy and institutions of local self-government in India. Though democracy was known to India in the past, the western emphasis on institutional democracy brought something new to the Indian consciousness. The growing spirit of intense nationalism and the popular idea of democracy sowed the seeds of discontent on the congenial soil of India. The growing impoverishment of the country, increasing population, the feeling of political subjugation and slavery and dehabilitation of the old social order made the discontent deep and wide-spread. Consequently the middle classes became often restless, aggressive, self-assertive and loud in their demands for the rights and privileges.

Besides this, they began to embrace western political ideologies of socialism, communism, individualism, idealism, humanitarianism, etc. This threatened the political edifice of the British imperialism in India.

Western civilisation and Indian society. We are witnessing a silent revolution in Indian society due to the impact of the west. On one side there is the group of conservatives and reactionaries who warned the people of the inscidious encroachments by the west, hindered all kinds of progress and persuaded the people loudly to follow old traditions and customs and maintain social solidity. On the other side there is the group of progressive persons. They focussed the attention of the people on the major social evils like the untouchability, unequality, backwardness of women, child-marriage, parda system, illiteracy, polygamy, devdasi system, etc. and induced people to accept good things of the west. This has aroused our social consciousness and helped in the growth of middle classes. It were the middle classes which imbibed many western ideas and followed numerous western customs and manners. They have the snobbishness of the west. Being well-educated, restless, critical and individualistic they played a prominent role in moulding the destiny of the country. They provided pioneers and guided for the political emancipation and social regeneration.

On account of the impact of the western civilisation and culture our moral ideas are changed beyond recognition. Our manners and methods, dress and diet, modes of thought and ways of living reveal western traces. The caste-system which has been the bed-rock of Hindu society for centuries together is itself collapsing; its rigidity is slackened. Many social evils are disappearing fast. A new view of life and conduct has been introduced in India by the west. A new note of individualism, socialism, revolt and scepticism is surging the Indian society. The younger generation is becoming individualistic in its outlook. The emphasis upon the individual has tended to loosen our social bonds and shake our social solidarity and cohesion. Our institutions of the joint-family and the caste-system have received very rude and violent shock. Previously the individuals surrendered to the society and sacrificed for the social good.

But now the individual exalts himself above society and therefore our old social patterns have lost their balance and are crumbling.

But, as noted above, the influence of the west has been beneficial for the uprooting of our social evils. Inspiration for social reforms is derived from the west. A significant result of impact of the west is the country-wide bold attempts to have social reforms—especially to liberate Indian womanhood from the bonds of social tyranny. The All India Women's Conference came into existence and its activities soon assumed a wide national range.

Indian religion, philosophy and the western culture and civilisation. The impact of western civilisation and culture introduced radical changes in the realm of our religion. Superstition was replaced by reason and conservatism yielded to independent thinking. The traditional explanations of the *Shastras* were subjected to critical scientific examination. A new conception of religion appeared in light of the western rationalism. Old beliefs, habits and traditions were critically and rationally examined. Many of them were denounced as they came from the past encumbered with effete practices and conceptions. Hinduism appeared to many a bundle of superstitions and they began to embrace Christianity and assimilated many western ideas. They began to study the Bible and follow its principles. This produced a reaction. A revivalist group rose in prominence. Religious reformers and saints like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand, Swami Vivekanand, Shri Aurobindo and others arrested the growth of Christianisation in India.

In the realm of philosophy we received from the west philosophies of materialism, realism and idealism. It created intellectual ferment in the educated classes.

Spirit of scientific invention and research. In the medieval age India lost her spirit of scientific invention and eagerness for research. In the modern age contact with the west made Indians realise that scientific inventions lie at the root of the marvellous progress of the west. From the inventions, discoveries and the lives of the scientists of the west Indians had learnt the

progressive outlook, rational and detached way of thinking, scientific approach to problems and the utilisation of science in various walks of life. The west has given us a spirit of inquiry, lure for exploration, method of scientific experiment and invention and boldness of enterprise. We have regained from the west not only great eagerness to seek truth and new knowledge but the capacity and power to probe into the mysteries of human life and universe which were lost to us in the dark medieval age. As a result of this, proper arrangements have been made for the advanced study of sciences in Indian educational institutions and universities. Many institutions and laboratories have been set up for the scientific experiments and inventions. The Indian Institute of Science at Banglore deserves mention in this respect.

Indian fine arts and the West. It is the west which has restored to us our ancient fine arts and made us know the glories of our past. We have completely forgotten them in the medieval period. European scholars like Sister Nivedita, Havell, Fergusson, Hindu Stuart etc. have revealed to the world the sailent features of the fine arts of India. Cunningham, Coomarswamy, Marshall, Percy Brown, Smith, Tod, Max Muller and others have written monumental works on the greatness and glories of our past. They laid the foundation of our knowledge of Indian art, epigraphy and archaeology. Many English and European scholars deciphered Indian inscriptions, explained their meaning and interpreted them successfully. They had undertaken excavation works and provided numerous authentic source materials for constructing the history of India. All this has aroused in us the consciousness of the value of our arts and inspired us to write the authentic and scientific history of our country. Thus the successful efforts of the west enabled us to regain our cultural heritage.

The economic life and the West. In the domain of economic life the high standard of living of the materialistic west has challenged the Indian standard of living based on the deep sense of contentment and spiritualism. Consequently the old and easy ways of life began to crumble fast. Hereditary occupation could no longer guarantee the individual subsistence or comfort.

New types of employment and technical professions attracted persons from all communities and castes. As a result of this the old economic standards are gone.

The economic and industrial policy of the British destroyed the ancient industries of India and forced back the country to rural economy. But on account of the increased population and absence of new large scale industries agriculture could not be the sound means of subsistence. All this multiplied existing difficulties and created new problems. In the meanwhile the industrialisation in Japan and America and the growth of the capitalism reawakened Indians. Close contact with the western countries revealed to Indians a panorama of vast possibilities in the realm of economic life. The abundance of minerals, raw materials and labour inspired Indians to industrialise their country.

In course of time under the western influence new industries and manufacturing concerns were gradually set up and sound measures were adopted for the industrialisation. Consequently ancient economic values of life were changed considerably. Material prosperity was promoted and the standard of living rose gradually. Changes in the material conditions of existence have brought about profound changes in the mental outlook of the people. They have become aware of the economic backwardness and poverty of the country. Now they began to adopt measures for the rural and urban development. In other words, economic life of the country is being modernised.

But the greatest economic and political event of the west that has influenced economical, political, social and moral development of India is the Russian Revolution. The assumption of power by the proletariat not only in Moscow but in Peking also has a profound effect on the youths of India. They are now favourably inclined towards socialism and communism. Before 1920 there hardly existed any labour or peasant organisation in India. But the period between the two famous world wars and after witnessed the phenomenal growth of the labour movement, the establishment of trade unions, commencement of peasant agitation and the foundation of the socialist and the communist parties. The social ideology of the movement, derived from Marx and Engels, is revolutionary to the social,

political, economic and religious organisation of India. The new western ideology has changed our economic outlook, introduced a desire for liberty, a passion for social justice, a sense of revolt and a rebellious and anarchic mood. It has aroused the Indian intelligentsia to demand self-government for industrialisation. All this has changed the sway of religion, society and capitalism. A new demand for modernisation for all avenues of progress and for equality and justice is springing up. Consequently a different type of national sentiment based on economic divisions is rising up.

Indian influence on the western culture and civilisation. The above accounts makes one feel that in the modern age the West has profoundly influenced the course of Indian civilisation and India has been overwhelmingly dominated by the West. It is a fact that India witnessed reawakening due to the impact of the West. But India also influenced considerably the Western outlook in many ways. Chapter nine of the present book gives a detailed account of the Indian influence on the culture and civilisation of the West in ancient times. In the medieval period the Arabs and the Italians together with their goods from the East carried the ingredients and the thoughts of the Indian culture to Europe. Later on European travellers like Sebastien Friar Manrique, Pietro della Valles, Bernier, Tavernier, Thevenot, Nicolo Conti, Hawkins, Sir Thomas Roe, Peter Mundi, and other Jesuit priests had travelled all over India and taken to Europe the abundance in cultural inspiration from India. Sir Thomas Roe's idea of India provided inspiration for Milton's picture of Satan sitting exalted in his book Paradise Lost. Dryden was also so profoundly influenced that he composed a drama 'Aurangzeb'. In 1671 the French traveller Bernier had taken with him to Europe Mughal prince Dara Shikoh's manuscript of Upanishads translated into Persian. Later on French and German Jesuits and Christian missionaries had studied Sanskrit and got some Sanskrit works published. In 1732 a Jesuit compiled the first grammar of Sanskrit in a European language. As a result of this a famous revolutionary writer of France, Voltair, and later on Amiel emphasised that the souls must be 'Brahmanised' for the spiritual progress of humanity.

In the closing years of the eighteenth century European scholars endeavoured collectively for the systematic study and dissemination of Sanskrit literature. A group of orientalists encouraged the first regular study of Indian culture. The three English men, Sir Charles Wilkins, Sir William Jones and Colebrooke 'aimed at a union of Hindu and European learning' and had done a good deal to introduce the ancient Sanskrit classics to the Western world. Wilkins was the first European to translate the Gita. William Jones founded in 1785 the Asiatic Society of Bengal. It was under the patronage of this Society that authoritative translation of many Indian Sanskrit classics were published and they 'have reverberated the fame of the Indian culture throughout the whispering galleries of Europe'. Jones edited, among other Sanskrit works, several Sanskrit plays including the *Shakuntla* by Kalidas. He also translated *Manu Smriti* in English. He was the first to declare to the West 'that Sanskrit was the most scientific language and contained words common both to Latin and Greek language'. Thus, it was he who laid the foundations of the science of comparative philology and paved the path for the evolution of the theory of Max Muller. The study of phonetics, encouraged in Europe, revealed that the races which spoke Sanskrit, Latin, Greek and 'Jand', the language of Persia, had a good deal of resemblances in religion, rites, mythology and social customs and institutions. This has thrown a flood of light on the theory of the original home of the Aryans. Another valuable work of Jones was in the realm of chronology of Indian history which gradually aroused interest in the study of Indian inscriptions and coins.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century H. T. Colebrooke translated the largest number of Sanskrit works, studied widely Hindu Law, philosophy, grammar, astronomy and religion, wrote extensively on various aspects of Indology and edited many Sanskrit texts, such as the grammar of Panini and *Hitopdesha*. It is said that an Englishman Hamilton taught Sanskrit to some German and French scholars and therefore it led to vigorous researches in Sanskrit literature and deep study of Indian culture in Germany and France. But Germany

was the first country in Europe to discover the hidden treasures of Sanskrit literature and German scholars endeavoured hard to bring into light several Sanskrit texts. Consequently profound influence was exerted on the German thinkers and philosophers by Indian religion and culture. To the German scholar Schopenhaver the Upanishads came as a new Gnosis, as a revelation. He said that the study of the Upanishads had been the solace of his life and it would be solace of his death. The well-known German philosopher Kant's central doctrine that 'things of experience are only the phenomena of the things-in-itself has been acknowledged as essentially a doctrine of the Upanishads. The Indian poets influenced the German writers and poets ; for example the influence of Kalidasa's *Meghduta* (the Cloud Messenger) on the 'Maria Stuart' of Schiller is most distinct. The famous German poet Goethe had lavishly admired Kalidasa's Sanskrit drama *Shakuntla* and he has modelled his prologue to Faust on the prologue of this particular drama. Later on another German scholar Max Muller had completed and published the translation of the text of the Rigved after strenuous labour of thirty years. He had derived such inspiration from India that he convinced the Western people of the magnificence and majesty of Indian culture by his original works, translations and compilations of Sanskrit texts. By attracting scholars' attention to the study of comparative philology and religion he introduced revolution in the domains of philosophy and religion.

Like Europeans American scholars could not but be influenced by the Indian culture, religion and philosophy. The famous American writer and thinker Emerson, poet Walt Whiteman and Alcott were profoundly influenced by Indian philosophy. Emerson used to read and re-read the Gita and the Upanishads to a group of poets, authors and thinkers of America in Concord, Massachusetts. Emerson's essays like "the Over-Soul" and "Circles" and poems like "Brahma" are nothing but Upanishadic thought. Poet Walt Whiteman's poems "*Passage to India*" and "*Leaves of Grass*" reflect distinctly the spiritual life of India and the mixture of the Upanishads and the Bhagvat Gita of the Hindus. The American Transcendental Movement,

of which Emerson was the leader, was the outcome of the impact of Indian culture. After the extensive tour of Swami Vivekanand in America Indian Vedant was well studied and today there are Vivekanand's Ashrams which have been radiating centres of Indian culture and religion in that region. They have grown and expanded into a net work of organisations of social and spiritual service. Today J. Krishnamurti, an Indian thinker and philosopher, has been explaining to Americans Indian philosophy and spiritual ideology and it has been profoundly influencing the West. If the 'California Group' is established for the study and observance of the esoteric teachings of Indian Vedantic Philosophy in North America, Circles Esoterico da communhao do Pensamanto in Sao Paulo, Brazil in South America is founded 'to comprehend the spiritual wisdom of the world and particularly that of India. It has recently organised researches into Vaishnavic thought. Besides this the India Society and the International School of Vedic and Allied Research, organised by a group of Indians in America, has been furthering the cause of Indian culture in an admirable way. Under the auspices of these the depth and profoundity of India's aesthetic expressions and their psychology and motivation have been unravelled to big American audiences.

Like the poets of America and Europe, the poets, writers thinkers, philosophers and scholars of England have also been influenced by the Indian religion and philosophy. The works of Shelley, Wordsworth, Carlyle and Robert Browning are full of the traces of the Indian Vedant. When Emerson first visited Carlyle, he received a copy of the Gita as a present from Carlyle. Tennyson, the famous poet—laureate of England, has referred to Indian topics in some of his own poems. Sir John Woodroff was so much attracted by the Tantrik cult of India that he followed it and edited in a masterly way a number of Tantrik texts. It was through his exposition of Tantrik thought that the ideas of Tantras entered the West in modern times. But the influence of Indian thought is most obvious in the philosophical writings of famous modern English thinkers like Gerald Heard and Aldous Huxley. It is said that the thought of Gerald Heard clearly exhibits Shri Aurobindo's teachings. The greatest

English novelist, Somerset Maugham, favoured visit to India to acquire knowledge of the higher values of life.

Ireland is considerably influenced by Indian religion and culture. The famous jurist 'Maine has shown that the old Brehon laws of Ireland are derived from the Vedic laws of India.' The new celtic revival in Ireland is influenced by the Hindu philosophy and religion. The great Irish literary and dramatic revival bears traces of Indian ideas. George Russel and Yeats who were the two chief inaugurators of this Irish movement were deeply influenced by the spiritual thought and life of India. The poetry of Russel is soaked in Indian mysticism.

During the British rule many British officials, businessmen and Christian missionaries lived in India and came in close contact with the Indians. Many of them were so profoundly influenced by the Indian culture that they wrote many authoritative works about India. Historians like Elphinstone, Tod, Malcome, Smith, Duff, Rapson, poets like Edwin Arnold and Kipling and novelists like Thackeray are such Englishmen who endeavoured to interpret India to the West. The School of Oriental and African Studies in London is trying to encourage the study of Indian culture and philosophy. Prof. Turner who is its chief advocate has mastery over Sanskrit. Dr. Bake is well versed in classical music and folk lore and folk dances of India. In the nineteenth century the daily English life was so much influenced by the Indian ideas that Indian *hukkah*, *polaw* and *chatney* became very popular and many Indian words, manners and dishes entered the English society. The India Society and the recently founded Society for Cultural Fellow-ship with India prove that England recognises the majesty and splendour of Indian culture and desires to deepen her cultural relations with India.

In the present century many European countries are taking a keen interest in Indian culture. The famous French Savant Romain Rolland is well 'noted for his deep understanding of the intrinsic meaning of Indian culture.' He has written with great reverence works on Shri Ramkrishna, Swami Vivekanand and Mahatma Gandhi. The renowned French mystic Paul

Richard was considerably influenced by the doctrines of Rishi Aurobindo. A group of French scholars, among whom Sylvain Lewy is noted, has done valuable work in the realm of Indology. Institute de civilisation Indianne is a famous institution in France which has been promoting the study of Indian culture and understanding Indian life. The Leo University is also encouraging research on the Satpath Brahmans. Louis Renon of the Paris University, who is a famous indologist and Sanskrit scholar, during his talk at Santiniketan in 1949 remarked that the best writers and thinkers of France had been influenced by Indian thought and culture.

The well-known German thinker Count Hermann Keyserling was so much influenced by Indian mysticism and spiritual ideology that he recognised 'the absolute superiority of India over the West in philosophy.' As the German people consider themselves an off-shoot of the Aryans, they take a keen interest in Sanskrit, the language of the Aryans. Munich and other University centres have been patronising the study of the Sanskrit literature. Many Sanskrit texts including the Vedas have been translated in German language. Some authoritative works are also edited on Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism. Glassenhap is famous for his commentaries on several Sanskrit philosophical texts including one of Madhvacharya. There are many Oriental libraries in Germany. In the Russian region of Germany there exists the famous institution 'Biblio Theckder Dentschen Morgenlandischen Gessll-schaft' which contains 40,000 books on Oriental culture, literature and religion. 'The Summer School for Spiritual Research in Ascona, Switzerland, has the religions of modern India as one of its special subjects of study'. The Kern Institute in Holland and the Oriental Institute in Italy are famous centres where original work is being carried on on Indian fine arts, archaeology and literature. A renowned professor of the Kern Institute has successfully edited the Bhisma Parva of the Mahabharat, the Garud Puran, the Brahmand Puran etc. Research work is also being undertaken on Pali and Sanskrit in Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland. Sten Konow of Norway is renowned for his original researches on the evolution of religious thought of India. Winternitz

of Czechoslovakia is well-known for his monumental work on the growth of Indian literature. Prof. Tucci has made Italy famous by his researches on Sanskrit and studies in Vaishnavic thought. He has collected rare manuscripts and pictures from India, Nepal and Tibet. In Belgium a priest has studied the works of Nagarjun and has written a good work called Le Traits de la Grand Vertu de Saggesse. Stonislaw F. Michalski is a great distinguished scholar of Sanskrit in Poland. He has founded the Oriental section of Warsaw Scientific Society and published books on the Gita, the Upanishads, the Ramayan and other Sanskrit classics. He has devoted his whole life to the study of Sanskrit and ancient Indian literature.

In the twentieth century the Theosophical Society and its presidents Dr. Annie Besant, Dr. G. Arundale, C. Jinrajdas and N. Shriram have endeavoured hard through the centres of the Society to disseminate the truths of Indian religion and culture. Dr. Annie Besant who had dedicated her whole life to the cause of social, cultural and spiritual uplift of India had diffused the knowledge about the Indian culture and expounded the religion of India through her books, articles, lectures, tours, etc. Similarly the works, discourses and tours of Swami Vivekanand, Swami Ram Tirth, the inspired messengers of India, Shri Rabindranath Tagore, Shri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Sir Radhakrishnan, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru etc. have spread abroad Indian culture. They have paved the path for building up India's spiritual empire in modern times. Exhibitions of Indian arts and industries and various Indian cultural programmes have been organised at many places in Europe and America. This has aroused abroad a keen interest in our culture and fine arts. Now the West has developed a taste for the Indian artistic works. As a result of the exhibitions of the paintings of talented artists like Nandlal Bose and the demonstration of Indian music and dance by the best artists like Udayshankar, Ram Gopal and Radha Shri Ram the influence of Indian art is permeating in the West. Its glories and majesty are recognised there.

A large number of Indian poets, writers, journalists, novelists, essayists, critics and short-story writers have written in Engslish

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Manmohan Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore, Toru Dutta, Lalita Devi, H. Chattopadhyaya, Dilip Kumar, Aurobindo, Mulkraj Anand, M. S. Iswaran, K. S. Venkataramani, Pandit Nehru, Humayun Kabir, Radhakrishnan etc. are the distinguished literary figures who wrote in English. Consequently there is a rich luxuriant output of the Indo-Anglian literature. The works of these have evoked loud appreciation from the West. Thus the impact of the West was felt by us in the domains of religion, society, politics, literature—nay in every walk of like and after a violent shock we were awakened to our own inborn potentialities. But the West could not escape the effect of India's close contact. It not only 'realised a-new the glory that was Ind' but was raised into a higher and spiritual life of Divine Knowledge, Bliss and Harmony.

Chapter 16

Modernisation

INDIA witnessed epoch-making changes from the later half of the nineteenth century. It was the beginning of modernisation. It commenced when we turned to West for new knowledge and light after being impressed by the Western education, culture and civilisation. This has paved the path for all round nationwide progress.

By the end of the first half of the nineteenth century there crept in such social evils as spiritual blindness, superstitions, untouchability, social conservatism, external formalism, etc. They had unbalanced our social and religious life and the vitality of Indian life collapsed. There was chaos and disorder in the economic life of India also due to the special economic policy of the British. Flourishing crafts and industries were ruined, poverty and starvation became the most glaring phenomenon, the course of economic progress was clogged, the entire economic basis of Indian life was blown up. This economic ruin adversely affected the social life in India. Development of fine arts was hindered, life became dull and dreary, and the main fountain of India's spiritual life got dried up. But under the influence of the West these evils were remedied gradually and with the social and economic progress straneous attempts were made to modernise the country. Now we avail of the opportunity to describe the economic policy of the British and changes introduced therein.

The Industrial and Economic Policy of the British in India. Though India has been an agricultural country, trade and

industry did not lag behind. Numerous crafts and industries flourished well together with agriculture. There was a happy blending of agriculture and handicrafts. Economic life was well organised. The ancient and medieval history of India will bear testimony to this fact. India 'was not only the nursing mother of Asia feeding its different countries with rice, wheat, sugar', but also the great industrial workshop for the world producing in abundance raw-cotton, silk, wool, jute, opium, salt-petre and manufacturing number of articles for the markets extending from the Malaya Archipelago in the East to Europe in the West and from the remote shores of the Caspian Sea to the wide coasts of Mozambique and Madagascar near Africa. This naturally induced Europeans to trade with India. The Portuguese, the Dutch, the English and the French landed here for the purpose of trade. Gradually the British ousted other Europeans. In due course they established their supremacy here by preferential treatment (vicious system of monopoly and trade privileges secured from the Mughals), diplomacy and armed interference in the affairs of the native states. They caused tremendous upheaval in the domain of Indian economic life by their industrial and economic policy the keynote of which was exploitation.

There was Industrial Revolution in England during the period extending from the closing years of the eighteenth century to the first quarter of the nineteenth century. This led to the growth of numerous manufacturing concerns. Productive power of England increased considerably. There were heaps of variety of machine-made goods. It created two problems (i) England needed a good deal of raw materials to feed her industries, and (ii) England required extensive and cheap markets for her increased output. The gradual conquest and consolidation of the British power in India enabled the English to solve these two problems. India had plenty of raw cotton, jute and coal and provided markets in her villages and towns for the British goods. Consequently the economic policy of the British in India was determined in the light of these two problems.

To achieve the economic prosperity of their motherland the

British pursued the policy of increasing the output of raw materials in India. Therefore, agriculture was encouraged by an extensive net-work of canals and the mines were worked with the foreign capital. Means of transport and communications were extended so that raw-materials and plentiful provisions might be exported to England easily and conveniently. Thus Indian raw-materials and provisions were sent to England and in return India imported British manufactured goods, medicines and various other articles of daily use. The English followed a policy of inactivity, indifference and negligence so far the Indian industries and trade were concerned. This proved fatal. Cheap manufactured goods from the West were sold in the Indian markets. The indigenous goods could not stand the competition with the foreign machine-made articles. This led to the decay of Indian crafts and industries and India necessarily began to depend on the western countries for the satisfaction of her needs. After the decay of the industries people began to lean heavily on agriculture. Gradually agriculture was overcrowded. Its productive capacity being limited it staggered to support the rising population in India. This led to acute poverty and devastating famines. Thus the selfish economic policy of the British Government in India caused widespread dislocation in the domain of economic life. The following account of the Indian industries and trade will make all this clear.

Indian Industry and Trade, (1757 to 1857). In the first century of the British rule in India, the volume of inland and foreign trade of India was controlled and regulated by three European nations France, Holland and England. The English enjoyed lion's share in this trade. By the end of the eighteenth century England had defeated other European powers and established her own supremacy in India. The East India Company now carried on the entire volume of Indian trade. India exported cotton and silk piece-goods, raw silk, sugar, salt, jute, opium, perfumes and saltpetre. The fine cotton cloths, specially the Dacca muslin was in great demand in several countries of the world. The chief industry of India at this time was the weaving of cotton, silk and woolen cloths and Dacca, Lucknow, Ahmeda-

bad, Nagpur and Madura were the centres of this industry. Shawls of high quality were prepared in the Punjab and Kashmir. Articles and utensils of copper, brass and bronze were made all over India and Banaras, Tanjore, Poona, Nasik and Ahmedabad were noted for metal works. Filigree work in gold and silver, jewellery, artistic work in stone, sandal-wood, ivory and glass were other famous industries of the country. Besides these, there were other minor crafts such as tannery, paper-making, perfumery, etc. The ship-building industry was also more developed compared to other European countries. Towards the close of the eighteenth century Indian trade and industry began to decay and the ruin was complete by the middle of the nineteenth century. The following causes are responsible for this.

1. *Large economic drain.* The East India Company and its officers exacted enormous sums of money in the form of bribes and gifts from the Indian princes, kings and nawabs. They exported this wealth to Britain. The examples of Mir Jafar, Mir Qasim, Chetsingh, Nawabs of Oudh and Carnatik will bear testimony to this fact. Then the surplus revenue of Bengal, after the acquisition of Diwani, was invested in purchasing the articles exported from India by the East India Company. Besides the vicious trade monopoly of the East India Company, many English officials indulged in private trade, hoarded and exported enormous wealth to Britain. They obtained special privilege *Dastaks* from the Nawab of Bengal. By virtue of *Dastaks* they obtained complete exemption from the custom duty. But they abused this privilege by selling Dastaks to Indian merchants to enable them to evade their custom duties. This led to a good deal of loss in Indian trade and revenues of the Nawabs of Bengal.

2. *Exploitation of the artisans.* When the servants of the East India Company indulged in private trade, they dispossessed the Indian artisans and producers of their goods forcibly. They not only paid nominal amount of money to the producers but compelled the Indian ryots to purchase their goods at very excessive rates. Many times the Indian weavers were forced to sign agreements to provide goods to the British servants at fixed

low prices. They were prevented by force from selling their goods to others except the British. Thus the servants of the Company fleeced the artisans and made unjust and illegal profits and ruined textile industry by their misconduct.

3. *English competition and the protective legislation of the British Parliament.* When the cotton and silken cloths of India became very popular in Britain, the British Parliament enacted protective legislation in 1700 and 1720 by virtue of which cotton and silk goods imported from India "could not be worn or otherwise used in England". To worsen the situation Indian cotton and silk goods could not be exported and sold in the European markets due to the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars and the Berlin Decrees. In 1780 the Court of Directors of the East India Company stopped the importation of printed cotton goods from Bengal. Later on the authorities of the Company prohibited the manufacture of silk fabrics in Bengal. Besides this, the sale of Indian goods suffered a severe setback due to the unfair competition of the English manufactures who flooded the markets of India with cheap machine-made cotton goods. Later on laws were passed in England between 1811 to 1814 by virtue of which the Indian mercantile marine was also ruined.

4. *Unsettled condition of the country.* The continuous wars, absence of efficient administration and a strong centralised Government and the unsettled condition of the country due to the misrule of the early period of the British rule caused serious setback to Indian trade and industry.

5. *The lack of capital and enterprise.* When the English controlled the volume of inland and foreign trade of India, they exported enormous wealth from India instead of utilising it in the development of Indian industry and trade. This enormous drain of wealth caused lack of capital in India, and whatever capital was left out it was sunk mostly in land. Besides this, the European traders built up their own system of commerce and banking in India. The people of the country had no share in it. Thus enough capital and enterprise were not available in India for industrial and productive purposes.

6. *Unwillingness, inability and indifference of the Indian*

Government. The British who carried on the Government in India followed a policy of inactivity and indifference so far the Indian trade and industry were concerned. It adopted no measures to protect the declining Indian industries. On the contrary it hindered the progress of Indian trade and crafts and discouraged deliberately Indian manufacturing concerns to safeguard those of England.

7. *Other factors.* The dwindling Indian merchants and bankrupt aristocracy could not provide capital, organisation and enterprise on modern lines. The policy of free trade was not followed in India to encourage the industrial development. There were neither scientific inventions for the industries nor encouragement to the intellectual classes for these.

All these factors crippled the industries of the country. The learned authors of *An Advanced History of India* (p. 811) rightly remarks : "The broad fact remains that, during the first half of the nineteenth century, India lost the proud position of supremacy in the trade and industry of the world, which she had been occupying for well-nigh two thousand years, and was gradually transformed into a plantation for the production of raw materials and a dumping ground for the cheap manufactured goods from the West." The British Government adopted no steps to avert this calamity.

Indian Industry and Trade (1858-1905). In the later half of the nineteenth century when in 1869 the Suez Canal was opened the volume of India's foreign trade increased. Peace, security, order and safety established by the British rule and the subsequent development in such means of transport and communication as railways, roads, post and telegraph, canals, ships and the pursuit of Free-Trade policy increased the sea-borne and inland trade of India. But the imported articles were more in quantity compared to the exported ones. The English rule, western civilisation and education and cheap machine-made goods changed social and economic habits and tastes of Indians and led to the growth of new ones. Its results were the disappearance of goods of home industries and overflooding of the Indian markets with foreign manufactured goods. Indian cottage industries declined considerably and occupied almost

negligible place in the economy of the country. The imports in India now mostly consisted of articles of luxury such as silk and woollen cloths, leather and leather goods, articles of decoration, fine furniture, watches and clocks, various kinds of paper and articles of stationery, earthenware and porcelain, perfumes, glass and glassware, many kinds of toys, cycles, cars, medicines, drugs, articles of games and sports, toilets, etc. Many imported articles now became of necessity in every house ; for example matches, soap, glass and chinaware, pencils, pens, nibs, torches, bulbs, umbrellas, utensils of aluminium, kerosene, niddles, sewing machines, paste, etc.

Towards the close of the nineteenth century a few educated intelligent Indians, far-sighted industrialists and businessmen began to understand the economic policy and industrial changes. They began to realise the need for industrialisation and private initiative. Consequently, the Indian industries were being gradually organised on the scientific lines. Cotton, jute, iron and steel, paper, tanning and leather industries were organised on large scale. Though there was foreign enterprise and capital in these industries, yet it was a good beginning. The Crimean war and the American civil war provided a strong stimulus to our jute and cotton industries. Though a cotton mill was set up in Calcutta as early as 1818, the first big mill was started in 1854 in Bombay where gradually the cotton and textile industry centered. After 1877 many cotton mills were set up in the cotton producing regions of Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Sholapur, Indore etc. From 1905 onwards the swadeshi movement and nationalism stimulated this industry. Though in the beginning it had to compete against the cotton and textile mills of Manchester and Lancashire and face the Free-Trade policy and protective legislation of England and hostility of the Indian Government, yet it developed well, its progress being slow.

Like cotton the first jute mill was started in 1854 and since then large number of jute mills have sprung up, mostly in Bengal. Many woollen concerns were also set up between 1880 and 1895, while mining industries were started between 1850 and 1880. Iron and steel industries were developing after 1880. The gradual growth of these industries led to the rise of other

industries like petroleum, coal, engineering workshops, mica, manganese and salt.

Indian Trade and Industry (1905-1947). Britain could not occupy the predominent position in the market of India. The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the advent of other countries like Germany, Japan, the U.S.A. in Indian market as the competitors of Great Britain. As a result of this both Indian trade and competition increased in volume. The first world war caused reduction in the import trade of India. After the war there was booming trade in India. But the economic depression of 1932-34 gave a serious setback to it and consequently both the import and export trade of India declined considerably. The second world war provided a strong stimulus to Indian trade and volume of Indian trade with Africa, Europe and other countries of Asia increased a good deal.

In the nineteenth century the British Government followed the policy of fiscal injustice in India. The industries in India received no protection. R. C. Dutt rightly remarks that "as an instance of fiscal injustice it is unexampled in any civilised country." But the political agitation, aggressive nationalism, acute poverty of the country, famines and grave economic discontent compelled the Government to change its policy. Therefore in the time of Lord Curzon an important change was introduced in the Government attitude towards Indian industries and a separate Imperial Department of Commerce and Industries was created in 1905. The first world war not only revealed industrial poverty and backwardness of India but made the British Government 'realise clearly the importance of industrialisation not only from economic point of view, but also from the military.' Therefore being compelled by military requirements a Munitions Board was set up in 1917 by the British Government for the industrial development. Though its functions were confined to the purchase and manufacture of Government stores and munitions of war, it stimulated industrial progress in India by providing information and advice and by placing orders for the Government with the Indian concerns. To satisfy the demand of Indian public the Government appointed an Industrial Commission in 1916 to find out the immense

possibilities of Industrial development, to suggest ways and means for the investment of Indian capital in trade and industries and recommend steps the Government should adopt to encourage industries. The Government accepted the recommendations of the Commission and endeavoured to translate them in practice. After the constitutional reforms of 1919 'industries' had become a Transferred Subject and later on the Government set up the Department of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics. To coordinate the work of industrial development in all provinces Department of Industries was also created in each province. When the volume of Indian trade increased the European and Indian Chambers of Commerce were established. They are non-official associations but they have been keenly interested in the progress of India's trade and industries. In 1921 the Government appointed a Fiscal Commission to suggest changes in the tariff policy of India. It recommended the policy of protection for the Indian industries. On the recommendation of this Commission a Tariff Board was created in 1923. Accepting its recommendations the Government extended protection to many industries like the iron and steel, salt, cotton, match, paper, sugar etc. But this protection was neutralised by the policy of the Imperial preference (practised vigorously after the Ottawa Conference in 1932) and the fixation of high exchange rate of 1 *s.* 6 *d.* for a rupee. The Imperial Perference 'provided for certain margin of perference on a number of goods on importation into India from the United Kingdom or from a British Colony.' (*An Advanced History of India*, p. 951) This proved fatal to Indian industries. In the meanwhile the Government concluded numerous commercial treaties with many foreign countries and appointed Indian Trade Commissioners there for the development of industries and trade of the country.

Though the force of circumstances compelled the British Government to revise its economic policy, yet many industrial evils hindered the progress of industrialisation. The immobility, inability and inertia of workers, absence of indigenous capital, exploitation by the foreign capitalists, evils associated with capitalism and foreign rule unskilled inefficient labour,

lack of organisation and joint-stock enterprise and want of state bounties and aids and industrial experiments and research are some of the evils and drawbacks that have arrested the growth of Indian trade and industry. However, attempts have been made to remedy this state of affairs. When the popular Government was established in provinces in 1937 measures were adopted to carry out the industrial projects and an Indian planning committee was set up under the chairmanship of Pandit Nehru. But nothing substantial could be achieved in this direction due to the second world war (1939-45). During this war many industries and manufacturing concerns were set up in the country for the purpose of arms and ammunitions. This stimulated the growth of technical education and encouraged trade and industries. After the termination of the war it was declared that the Government would control the key-industries like iron and steel, coal, concerns manufacturing radios, ships, engines and chemicals. When political emancipation was achieved in 1947 and national Government was set up, the policy of nationalisation of industries was declared. But in view of the economic troubles, this was postponed for ten years. However, the national Government is encouraging several crafts and industries and establishing new manufacturing concerns and sharing with some other private agencies. A huge factory for the manufacture of engines at Chitranjan, another at Sindri for fertiliser and another for penicilin near Poona have been created by the Government. Industries like cement, glass, jute, silk, paper, plastic, rubber, coffee, tea, opium, match, sugar, cotton, leather, vegetable oil, ship-building, lac and iron and steel have been progressing with leaps and bounds. Various laws have been enacted to regulate banking, insurance and industrial management. Trade agreements with numerous countries are concluded. In 1949 the Export Promotion Committee was appointed to recommend measures for the increase of Indian exports. All this has introduced revolutionary changes in the domain of trade and industry. Export of raw materials from India is now reduced considerably and the Government regulates the imports. Goods which are absolutely necessary are imported. Now the aim of the economic policy

of the Government is that the India-made goods are to be exported in proportion to the imports from foreign countries so that we may have favourable trade balance.

Industrial Labour

Trade Union[1]. With the progress of industrialisation, the industrial labour and its problems began to grow in prominence. When several factories and mills were established many persons joined them as workers. But neither the rich industrialists nor the management of the mills and factories paid heed to the problems of labour. The Government was also indifferent to it in the beginning.

The industrial workers lived in dark, dirty and unhealthy slums. The tone of their morality was reduced considerably. Their life was regulated neither by religion nor by social restrictions. They fell easy victims to many social evils like drinking, gambling, prostitution etc. Conditions in their factories were deplorable. Fresh air and light did not have free play there. They had to work for twelve hours. Neither they had weekly holidays, nor separate resting places, nor provision for entertainments. They had no medical facilities. There was no adequate arrangement for the education of their children. They had to get less wages compared to the amount of their manual labour. They always fell victims to the exploitation of the industrialists, capitalists and mill owners. As a result of the industrialisation, the factory workers increased in number. Gradually they became conscious of their sufferings and raised their voice against their exploitation. They demanded a reasonable standard of living and formed labour associations. In the beginning they were local and regional but gradually in course of time they became nation-wide. In 1890 the first Association of Millhands was established in Bombay, then the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants of India and Burma in 1897 and Calcutta Printers' Union in 1905 and the Bombay Postal Union in 1907. Other associations of labourers sprang up in Bombay

[1] For details refer to *Trade Unionism in India* by Puntambekar ; *The Indian Working Class* by R. K. Mukerji ; *The Rege Committee Report.*

in 1909. But country-wide labour agitation was the outcome of the industrial development and grave discontent among the workers. During and after the termination of the first world war the labourers suffered a good deal on account of the high prices of the bare necessities of life and their fixed wages. The capitalists gained enormous profits during the war, but no attention was paid to the deplorable condition of the labourers. Consequently they became restless. India's membership of the International Labour Organisation in 1919, the Russian Revolution of 1917 and success of strikes contributed in no less degree to the labour discontent. There appeared a general awakening among the workers. They began to realise that they must endeavour collectively to protect their rights and rescue themselves from the capitalists' exploitation. Consequently they organised in groups and associations and put forth their demands. Their efforts were crowned with success.

But concrete steps to improve the lot of labourers were adopted after the first world war. In 1918 Shri B. P. Wadia founded the Madras Labour Union and in 1920 Shri Narayan Malhar Joshi established the first All-India Trade Union Congress. This very year also witnessed the foundation of All-India Railwaymen's Federation. It was associated with All-India Trade Union Congress. The Textile Labour Association of Ahmedabad was established in 1920. This was followed by the establishment of many Trade Unions in the industrial and commercial centres and frequently strikes broke out there. To legalise the Trade Union activities to some extent the Indian Trade Unions Act was passed in 1926. Though illiteracy among the labourers, want of efficiency and skill among them, lack of experienced leadership, immobility, agricultural outlook and heterogenous character of Indian labour hindered considerably the growth of Trade Union activities, yet the movement continued to expand all over the country. In 1929 there was a split in the Trade Union Congress on account of the communists. The moderate Trade Unionists severed their relations with the Trade Union Congress and created a separate organisation known as the Indian Trades Union Federation. But in 1931 in the Calcutta session of the Trade Union Congress a

further split occurred and the leftists founded the All India Red Trade Union Congress. Thus there appeared three Trade Unions—one belonged to the communists, the other to the leftists and the third to the rest of the members. This disunity lasted for six years. In 1938 attempts were made to amalgamate all the bodies into one central organisation—called the All India Trade Union Congress.

During the second world war (1939-45) the Trade Union Congress followed the policy of neutrality. But as one section of it was in favour of offering aid to the Government for the war, a new labour organisation, called Indian Federation of Labour, was established under the leadership of M. N. Roy and Jamnadas Mehta. The All India Trade Union Congress was dominated by the socialists. But some of its labour leaders, who were inclined towards the National Congress, founded in May 1947 a separate organisation called the Indian National Trade Union Congress. This is the biggest organisation of the labourers in India. The International Labour Organisation has also recognised it as the representative institution of the Indian labour. In 1948 the Socialists too have set up a labour organisation with a view to implement their ideology.

In many cases the trade unions lack the essential attribute of an effective organisation of labour and wherever they have functioned, they have acted merely as strike committees. The instrument of collective bargaining in the hands of organised labour has not yet been developed since its energies were wasted in fighting the disruptive and disintegrating forces that have been haunting the movement. The need of the hour is the abolition of the division of the trade union movement among small, unstable and often conflicting factions that sap its strength.

Measures to improve the lot of the labourers. The labour movement and labour organisations and their subsequent country-wide agitation compelled the Government to take steps to improve the deplorable conditions of the workers. Many important acts were passed for the purpose. The capitalists and mill-owners also provided a good deal of facilities to the labourers. They are designated as labour welfare activities.

They include housing, medical and educational facilities, provisions for rest and recreation, cooperative societies, day nurseries, good sanitary accommodation, holidays with pay, social insurance including sickness and maternity benefits, provident funds, gratuties, etc.

On the recommendations of the Factory Commission of 1908, the Factory Act of 1911 was passed. It limited the working hours of children and women to seven and eleven hours respectively and provided for a compulsory recess for half an hour. Some new provisions were added for the health and safety of the industrial labourers. An International Labour Conference was held at Washington in 1921 and in the light of its recommendations a new act was passed in 1922 for the benefits of the workers. It raised the minimum age for child worker from nine to twelve and maximum age from fourteen to fifteen, their working hours were limited to six with a compulsory rest intervals ; the hours of work for the adults were restricted to eleven a day. They were to be paid for their overtime work and enjoy weekly holidays. In 1923 the Workmen's Compensation Act was passed. It provided compensation to the workers for death and certain types of injury.

Indian nationalism, industrial unrest, grave discontent among the workers, influence of the labour movement and India's participation in the International Labour Organisation at Geneva provided strong stimulus to the reforms of the Labour. Consequently in 1929 a Royal Commission was appointed to investigate and report on the existing conditions of labourers including their health and standard of living. When its report was published in 1931 some of its recommendations were put into practice both by the Central and Provincial Governments. This was followed by the enactment of the Amendment of the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1933 and the Indian Factories Act of 1934. By virtue of this Act children below the age of twelve were forbidden from working in factories. The work of the children above twelve was restricted to five hours a day. Children and women were to work only in day time. Adults were to work 48 hours per week in permanent and well established shed factories and 50 hours in seasonal concerns. They

were to enjoy full pay leave after one year's term of work and get double wages for overtime work. Proper arrangements were to be made for sanitation, fresh air and light in manufacturing concerns and canteens in big mills and factories. Then the Trade Disputes Act was passed in 1934 by virtue of which Conciliation Boards were to be set up for settling the disputes between the mill management and labourers. In 1936 the Payment of Wages Act was passed. It tried to regulate the payment of wages to the workers. This was followed by the Indian Mines Act. It has fixed for adults maximum ten hours a day and 54 hours a week for work. Children below the age of thirteen and women are not allowed to work in the mines. This Mines Act was also amended many times. In 1948 the Coal Mines Provident Fund and Bonus Scheme Act was passed. It has made provisions for the mine-workers to get provident fund and bonus. Many Factory Inspectors are appointed to observe the working of these above-mentioned acts.

Besides these acts, the Y.M.C.A., the Social Service League, and the Depressed Classes Mission Society and other philanthropic associations have been endeavouring to improve the conditions of the labourers in many places. When the Congress party came in power in 1937 various Committees were appointed in Bombay, Kanpur, C. P., Bihar etc. to investigate the conditions of the labour in the industrial areas and suggest measures for their improvement. During and after the second world war greater attention has been paid towards the improvement of the conditions of the labourers through welfare work as well as Government legislation. The State Governments of U.P., Bombay, West Bengal and Mysore have organised labour welfare work, started funds and opened many welfare centres. The Employees State Insurance Act which has been enacted recently has given a great impetus to the labour welfare work. The Employers have also organised welfare work ; for example the Indian Jute Mill Association has undertaken direct responsibility for welfare activities and provides workers with healthy recreation, education, etc., the Tata Iron and Steel Co. Ltd. has done a lot of work at Jamshedpur, the Ahmedabad Labour Association spends 60 to 70 per cent of its income on welfare

works, Railway Unions and the Indian Federation of Labour have also done some noteworthy work. Recently the problems of Capitalism and Labour assumed great significance and the disputes between the workers and mill-owners multiplied. Therefore in 1947 the Industrial Disputes Act was enacted. It has made provision for the appointment of Workers Committee and Conciliation Officers to settle industrial disputes. This was followed by the passing of a new Factories Act and the Employee's State Insurance Corporation Act. All such measures have gone a long way to better the condition of labour in India.[1]

Agriculture

The agricultural policy of the British Government in India. Before the advent of the British, agriculture, trade and industry were well balanced in India. There flourished many crafts together with agriculture. But the British policy of "the economic squeeze" crushed crafts and industries of India and we were compelled to depend on agriculture. In course of time this diversion bore heavily on agriculture of which the methods were primitive and the extension of cultivation lagged far behind the need to support the increasing population. Agriculture could not progress well in absence of modern scientific methods of cultivation. The evils of fragmentation, the Zamindari system, absentee landlordism, multiplication of subletting, forced labour, natural calamities and increasing indebtedness all made farmers miserable. Gradually poverty of the farmers increased, agriculture decayed and unemployment grew in intensity, the luckless handicraftsmen, driven out of their hereditary occupations by the competition with the cheap

For industrial development of India and the fiscal policy of the British Government refer to the following books : *The Industrial Evolution of India* by D. R. Gadgil ; *The Evolution of Indian Economy* by K. K. Sharma ; *The Indian Fiscal Policy* by B. P. Adarkar ; *Imperial Preference in India* by B. K. Madan ; *The Economic History of India* by Vera Anstey ; *The Economic History of India* (under Early British Rule) by R. C. Dutta ; *Labour Welfare in India* by P. S. Lokanathan ; *Labour Legislation in India* by Bose.

machine-made goods, swelled the number of landless agrarian labourers. New classes sprang up between the actual tillers of the soil and the State. They intercepted the profits of the peasantry. The assessment was so heavy and the collection so rigid that even the last peny was taken out from the pockets of the peasants.

There were two remedies for these problems—(1) Industrialisation which might reduce the burdens on land and remove unemployment and poverty, (2) to increase agriculture products by introducing modern scientific methods of agriculture. But the English did not adopt these steps. They tried to hinder as far as possible the industrialisation in India till the end of the nineteenth century and did nothing to develop agriculture.

Agricultural progress and the establishment of Agriculture Department. In the beginning there was no separate department of agriculture. But Agricultural Departments were set up in different provinces on the recommendations of the Famine Commission of 1880. Later on in 1901 one Inspector General of Agriculture was appointed. He was to render advise to the Imperial and Provincial Governments on agricultural matters. In 1929 the Government abolished this post. But henceforth the Director of the Agriculture Research Institute at Pusa performed the duty of advising the Governments.

The first attempt to encourage agriculture on the scientific lines was made during the period of Lord Curzon. Credit goes to him for the organisation of the present Department of Agriculture. In 1903 the Pusa Agricultural Institute was founded for higher agricultural studies. In 1905 an All India Board of Agriculture was created to render all possible advice to the Government of India on agricultural affairs. In 1906 the Indian Agricultural Service was constituted by the Government. Gradually Agriculture colleges were established at Poona, Lyallpur, Kanpur, Nagpur, Allahabad, Coimbatore, etc.

After the Montague-Chemsford Reforms of 1919 Agriculture was made a 'Transferred Subject' and placed in charge of the Indian Ministers, while finance for it remained in the hands of British Ministers. But the Agricultural Research Institutions were maintained by the Central Government. In 1928

the Royal Commission of Agriculture suggested various ways and means to solve many agricultural problems. It was on the recommendations of this commission that the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research was constituted in 1929. It was to guide and advise Governments for agriculture and co-ordinate the activities of all the provincial departments. To provide better facilities for the marketing of agricultural output the Government founded a central marketing department in 1935. It has been helping the provincial Governments in the realm of agriculture. When the responsible Government was set up in 1937 in different provinces a large number of Acts were passed to remedy the deplorable conditions of the farmers to improve their material prosperity and rescue them from the clutches of Zamindars and money-lenders. After the achievement of political liberation bold attempts are being made to develop agriculture. 'Grow more food campaign' was launched to solve the problem of food. A good deal of barren land has been brought under cultivation with the help of tractors. Trees are being planted for rain and the best manure and the scientific improvements are being provided to the peasants. Many projects for dams and canals are being executed to provide more facilities for irrigation. Zamindari has been abolished to improve the lot of the peasantry. Cooperative Credit Societies have been established to solve the problem of rural indebtedness and to provide the best marketing facilities for the agricultural products.

Village-uplift. From time immemorial India has been a land of villages. Each village was economically a self-sufficient prosperous unit and enjoyed the blessing of republican form of government. The French traveller Tavernier who visited India in 1666 gives a good account of the well-populated villages, their good conditions and abundance of food. He remarks that 'Even in the smallest villages rice, flour, butter milk, beans and other vegetables, sugar and other sweetmeats, dry and liquid, can be procurred in abundance.' 'But the advent of the English proved a curse for the villages. During the British rule the traditions of local-self government had disappeared in villages; they became the centres of illiteracy, ignorance,

disharmony, bitterness and jealousy. Gradually the sway of Zamindars was established there. Then, unprecedented economic exploitation followed with all its stupendous and perplexing rural problems.

Under the influence of national awakening people began to look towards villages. They derived their inspiration for the purpose from Mahatma Gandhi. Gradually this feeling began to gain ground that, as seventy percent of the people live in villages material prosperity of the villages is to be promoted. Consequently a movement for village-uplift was set afoot. It aimed at the economic, social, cultural and political development of the villages. The village-uplift includes spread of education, establishment of hospitals, libraries, reading-rooms, revival of cottage industries, extension of roads, provision for means of entertainment, good sanitation and veterinary relief and other projects for agricultural improvements.

All India National Congress was the first institution to raise its voice for the village-uplift. Mahatma Gandhi established the All India Village Industries Association. Now the Government began to devote its attention to rural reconstruction and appointed Mr. F. L. Brayne as Commissioner for Rural Reconstruction and important experiments in rural uplift were carried on in the Gurgaon District of the Punjab State. Similar experiments were made in Bengal, Central Provinces and few native States. In 1933 Frederick Sykes, the then Governor of Bombay, 'initiated a comprehensive scheme of village reconstruction'. It was executed by District Committees. In 1935-36 the Government of India granted over two crores of rupees for the rural uplift. In 1937 when the Congress Ministries were formed in provinces rural reconstruction began to claim an increasing amount of attention from the Government. Village Panchayats, schools, libraries, reading rooms, graneries, hospitals and adult-education centres were established in villages. Attempts were made to revive old cottage industries. But the second world war slowed down the progress of the rural reconstruction. But, when the Congress formed its own Government after 1947, programmes for rural reconstruction were revived. Community projects have been launched for the purpose since October 1952.

Community Projects. They aim at bringing about all-round rural development by carefully using the natural and human resources in the villages. Agriculture under these projects is being improved and extended. Cottage and small scale industries are introduced and extended. Schools are established to impart education and train villagers in laws of health and housing. Vacant and barren land is brought under cultivation, better seeds, fertilisers and advice from the agricultural departments of States are being provided, dispensaries are set up, roads built and sanitation improved, village arts and crafts are being encouraged and animal husbandry is receiving due attention. In short, there is a thorough overhauling in rural life; social, economic and intellectual condition of the villagers is remarkably improved. The great difference between the community projects and the other schemes launched by the Government so far to improve the conditions in the villages is that the latter were mostly Government sponsored. There was little initiative on the part of the people. In the community projects the villagers are associated at every stage of the rural reconstruction and development; their needs and demands are carefully studied and they are to be active partners in the execution of these projects. They are to contribute a good deal to make them a success.

Famine. Agriculture in India depends on rain; it is a gamble with rain. Want of rain has caused famines in the country. In ancient times there were no famines. Megasthenes, who was the Greek ambassador at the court of Chandragupta Maurya (322-298 B. C.), had observed: "Famine has never visited India and there has never been a general scarcity in the supply of nourishing food." The country suffered from a few famines during the medieval ages. But their frequency was repeated during the British rule. There were six of them during the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century, causing death of 50,00,000 persons and eighteen during the last quarter of the same century with human losses estimated between 1,50,00,000 and 2,60,00,000. The epidemic diseases, cholera and malaria which followed in the wake of famines, took a heavy toll of human life. The calamity was

always aggravated considerably by the lack of provision on the part of the Government to adopt proper measures to cope with the famines. Till the close of the nineteenth century the Government had no definite policy of famine relief. The Famine Commission of 1880 made valuable suggestions such as suspension or remission of taxes, distribution of food and medicines during the actual duration of famine, providing work for able-bodied men and distributing doles to the aged and the infirm. On the strength of these recommendations the Famine Code of 1883 was prepared and a Famine Relief and Insurance Fund was created. Under the financial decentralisation caused by the Government of India Act 1919, each Provincial Government contributed every year a definite sum for the expenditure on famine. Under the new constitution the famine relief is entirely a Provincial subject.

Irrigation. Irrigation has a special significance in an agricultural country like India. Encouragement to irrigation is considered essential to meet the serious deficiency of rainfall or its unequal distribution. Very little attention was paid to irrigation projects during the rule of the East India Company. Old Irrigation works like the eastern and western Jamuna canals and the Ganga canals and the dams in the south were repaired. But later on frequency of famines compelled the Government to devote its attention to irrigation projects. Consequently in 1901 Lord Curzon appointed a commission on Irrigation. It not only recommended the extension of the productive and protective irrigation works, but drafted a scheme of irrigation works for the next twenty years. On the recommendations of this Commission Government Irrigation Department was created. Under the reforms of 1919 irrigation was made a Provincial subject. Since then considerable progress has been made in the construction of irrigation works. A large number of canals, wells, tube wells, dams across the rivers, tanks, etc. have been constructed. The most famous among them are the Satlaj Valley project, the Sukkur Barrage in Sindh, the Kaveri Reservoir and Mattur project, the Sarda Oudh canal in the Uttar Pradesh, the Lloyd Dam in Bombay, and the Bhandara Dam in the Deccan. After the political

liberation the Union Government in cooperation with the State Governments has undertaken the extension of old irrigation projects and construction of many new hydro-electric works. The most important among these are the Bhakra-Nangal Project in the Punjab, the Damodar Valley Project on the borders of Bihar and Bengal, the Kosi Project of Bihar, the Hirakud Dam of Orissa, the Ramsagar of Madras, the Narbada-Tapti Project of C. P. and Bombay, the Tungabhadra Project of Hyderabad and Madras, the Gandak River Project of U. P., Nepal and Bihar, the Chambal Scheme of Madhyabharat and the Jabai river Project of Rajasthan.

Means of Transport and Communications

In the economic life of a country means of transport and communications play an important part. Internal transport in a country is of four types, the road transport, the railway transport, the air transport and the river transport. The tradition of constructing and extending means of transport has been carried on in India since the days of the Imperial Mauryas. But the means of transport were decayed considerably during the rule of the East India Company in the closing years of the nineteenth century. In the beginning the Company concentrated its attention on the construction of Government buildings and residential quarters and roads for the military purpose. It was Lord Bentinck (1828-1835) who realised the importance of the road connecting Calcutta with the North-Western Provinces and so the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Delhi, ultimately carried on to Lahore and Peshawar, was built on traces of such former road and that from Bombay to Agra was commenced.

In the first half of the nineteenth century a Military Board was established in every province. Its function was to construct roads and erect Government buildings. Later on in 1854 Lord Dalhousie set up Public Works Department. Its function was to construct roads, canals and railway lines. In the twentieth century the maintenance of roads was considered an important duty for the motor transport. In 1929 a Standing Committee of Roads was appointed and a Road Fund was started for the construction and upkeep of roads.

During the second world war the importance of roads was enhanced considerably and therefore a few roads were laid out. In 1943 a Conference of Chief Engineers of different Provinces was held at Nagpur and a five year plan for the construction of roads was drafted and its execution commenced from April 1947. As a result of this roads were extended considerably in the country. But they were neglected in Rajasthan, Orissa and some parts of the Punjab. Steps have recently been taken to co-ordinate roads with railways. The Union Government has assumed financial responsibility for the construction and maintenance of national highways and the subject is included in the constitution. Besides this, the first and second Five Year Plans have made ample provision for road development.

Though the total mileage of roads in India is 2,30,000 but there is a serious lack of roads in the villages. There are no proper arrangements for visiting villages either by road or rail. After the second world war motor transport has made considerable progress. Buses for carrying passengers and trucks for goods are being used considerably all over the country. Motor transport is being encouraged in different parts of India and it is being nationalised in Bombay, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, etc.

Railways. Railways are the gifts of the British Rule in India. The history of Railways begins from 1845 when sanction was accorded for the construction of railway lines from Bombay to Kalyan, Calcutta to Raniganj and Madras to Arkonam. Consequently in 1853 the first railway line, G.I.P., was laid out between Thana and Bombay, in 1854 E.I.R. line was constructed upto 37 miles from Calcutta and in 1856 the work of the railway line from Madras to Arcot was commenced. In the beginning the aim of laying out these railway lines was to link the strategic places for the military purpose and to safeguard the interest of the English merchants.

The history of the railway construction is divided into four parts. In the first period (1853-69) railways were constructed by Joint Stock Companies. The Government of India guaranteed an interest ranging from 4 to 5 per cent on the capital of the Companies. The Government reserved the right to

purchase the lines at its option after twenty five years. This system, known as the old guarantee system, proved detrimental to the interest of the country. As the Companies received definite sum of interest from the Government they did not economise in the construction and maintenance of railways. Consequently they suffered heavy loss which was made up by the Indian Exchequer. Thus, the poor people of India had to bear heavy financial burden for the sake of foreign companies. Therefore the Government gave up the policy of Guarantee System and borrowed capital and constructed railways. This was the second period (1869-1880). During this period railway lines were laid out in Rajasthan, Indus Velley, Northern Bengal and Northern Punjab. But this policy of State construction and management was abandoned after a few years as the progress of railway construction became too slow and the Government encountered several financial difficulties due to the famines between 1874-79 and the Afghan war of 1878-1880. The Guarantee System, therefore, was again revived under terms more advantageous to the Government. Interest was guaranteed at a lower rate, *viz* , 3 per cent, and the Government was to secure three-fifths of the profits. During this period the Government patronised new companies such as the Nilgiri, the Delhi-Ambala, Kalka, the Bengal Central, the Bengal North-Western etc. But this experiment also failed. This was the third period. After this the Government encouraged the native States to construct railway lines within their territories. Consequently the Nizam State Railway line was the first to be laid out. From the beginning of the twentieth century the Railways began to earn good profits and gradually they became a source of revenue. In 1905 the Railway Board was established for the better management of the Railways and in 1908 Mackay Committee was appointed to draft a scheme of railway extension. But due to the first world war its recommendations could not be carried out. Later on in 1921 the Acworth Commission recommended a suitable policy for further development of railways. But its entire report was not accepted by the Government favourably. In the meanwhile the railway companies were exploiting the country. They entailed a heavy drain upon

Indian revenues and carried away profits to the amount of one crore a year out of India. Their Boards of Management sitting in London far away from India 'did not sympathetically consider the grievances of the poor passengers or struggling producers, manufacturers and traders who paid for the railways and their profits.' Therefore there was a nation-wide protest and agitation against these railway companies and so the Government was compelled to take over the direct management of some of the railways. The East India Railway and the Great Peninsula Railway were taken over in 1925, the Burma Railways in 1929, the Southern Punjab Railway in 1930, B. B. & C. I. Railway in 1942, etc. After the establishment of the national Government in 1947 railways were regrouped. Unplanned, haphazard and unsystematic development of railways, wide disparities in matters of administration, management, facilities and standard of services in the different railways, wastage of resources and duplication of services paved the path for the re-grouping. Consequently in 1951-52 the Indian railways were re-grouped in six regions—the Southern Railway, the Western Railway, the Central Railway, the Northern Railway, the Eastern Railway and the North-Eastern Railway. Since then the Government has been providing more amenities and facilities to the railway passengers and factories have been set up for the manufacture of railway engines and carriages.

Railways have not been an unmixed blessing for social, cultural and economic development of the country. They have brought distant places of India within easy reach and thus have been a great source of social and cultural intercourse and fostered a spirit of unity and one and the same pattern of nationalism among the Indians. Railways removed social prejudices, paved the path for social reforms, reduced the rigidity of the caste system, affected untouchability considerably, helped in the growth of fine arts, created interest in historical places, prevented famines and provided impetus to trade and industry.[1]

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[1] For Rail-Road Transport refer to *Problems of Transport Co-ordination in India* by S. K. Guha ; *Proceedings of the Rail-Road Conference (1933)* ; *Indian Economics* by Jathar and Beri, pp. 170-175.

Post, Telegraphs and Telephone. In the realm of transport and communication post, telegraphs and telephone have their own importance. There were adequate postal arrangements in the medieval and the British systematised it. In the beginning of the British rule letters were carried by the *Harkaras* and horsemen. In the first half of the nineteenth century the number of the post-offices was very much limited. In 1836, there were 276 post-offices. Lord Dalhousie organised the Post and Telegraph Department, and introduced the uniform half-anna postage service over the entire length and breadth of India. With the improvement in the means of transport and communications the postal service was also gradually regularised and developed. The first quarter of the twentieth century witnessed the establishment of many post-offices even in distant parts of the country. In 1948-49 there were 26,760 post-offices in India and in 1949 the airmail service was introduced and arrangements were made for wireless messages.

In 1854 Dalhousie laid out the telegraph lines in India. The first telegraph line was started between Agra and Calcutta. In the beginning of the twentieth century the number of the telegraph offices was increased and the telegraph lines were extended considerably. Upto 1912 the telegraph service was a separate department administered by Director-General of Telegraphs and it was in subordination to the Government Department of Commerce and Industry. But in 1914 the Posts and Telegraphs Departments were amalgamated. After the achievement of political independence the Post and Telegraph Department was developed considerably and postal and telegraphic facilities were also provided in rural areas. From the 1st June 1949 arrangements were made for sending telegrams in Hindi.

The telephone system was introduced in our country a very long period after the introduction of the Post and Telegraph. But our telephone arrangements are more expensive compared to those of the western countries. Consequently its use is confined to the rich person, businessmen, industrialists and the Government departments. It is absent in remote villages and towns. During the second world war the use of telephone

increased considerably. The increase in the volume of the Indian trade has given a great impetus to the extension of telephone lines. Consequently new telephone districts have been created and even small towns are being linked together now with telephone.

Broadcasting and Civil Aviation. It is only recently that broadcasting and civil aviation were introduced in India compared to other western countries. The radio clubs of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras carried on the work of broadcasting in a limited way and the Government provided financial aid to them. After prolonged negotiations an Indian Broadcasting Company was established and in 1927 this Company commenced broadcasting in Bombay and Calcutta, but in 1930 it went into liquidation. Since then the Government undertook the work of broadcasting and set up Indian State Broadcasting Service. Today it is known as All India Radio. In 1936 the Delhi Radio Station was created. Due to the second world war very powerful transmitters were fitted for the Delhi Radio Station. Today All India Radio is a part of the Information and Broadcasting Department of the Government. Later on Government prepared one eight-years scheme for broadcasting and tried to put it into practice. New radio stations were set up at many places. In view of the demand of many different states all the radio stations in India broadcast various political, social, religious, literary, cultural and economic programmes for rural and urban people speaking different languages. Broadcasting has played an important role in the evolution of our culture. It has provided a great impetus to music and literature and given a new cultural vision and outlook to the people. Besides this, it has established a close intercourse between the East and the West in the realm of thought and culture.

In the beginning of the twentieth century and specially during the first world war aeroplanes were used for military purposes, but after the termination of the war, their utility for civil purposes is also recognised and in the course of time the commercial value of the aeroplanes had come to assume great significance. Thus, the development of civil aviation is comparatively a new phenomenon. Though Europe and America

have made much progress, civil aviation developed slowly in India due to the indifference of the British Government. However, flying in India commenced for the first time in 1911 when some exhibition flights were given at different places to demonstrate to the people how the aeroplane did actually fly. The geographical position of India necessitated development in the civil aviation and the Government of India signed the International Air Convention in Paris in 1919 providing certain privileges to the aircrafts of other countries flying in India. In 1926 an Indian Air Board was constituted and on the strength of its recommendations the Civil Aviation Department was created in 1927. Subsequently the construction of aerodromes was started at a rapid progress. The second world war, as it progressed, gave great impetus to the development of air services in India. A Civil Aviation Training Centre was started at Saharanpur and another at Allahabad. Private enterprise also came rapidly forward and as early as 1940 ten flying clubs were established in India to impart instruction in aviation. The private organisations such as the Ratan and Dorabji Tata Trusts and the public airways companies did not lag behind and instituted scholarships of their own for advanced training in aviation. The Government of India followed a bold policy for the civil aviation development in the post-war period. The Hindustan Aircraft Factory was set up in Banglore in 1940 and it was recognised after the war. The Air Transport Licensing Board was created, a Rs. 15·4 crores programme of aerodrome construction was announced and a Research and Development Laboratory was established in 1946 by the Government. Besides the Government aeroplanes, several cross-country air lines were commenced to operate regularly, *e.g.*, Calcutta to Delhi, Calcutta to Bombay, Bombay to Delhi, Madras to Bombay, etc. All important towns of the country are now linked together by Air services and a remarkable progress is made in the direction of transport of goods and passengers by air. A new concrete step was taken in connection with the external air services of India and in 1948 Air India International Ltd. was established in India to provide facilities to the passengers travelling by air abroad. It began to run aeroplanes between Bombay and

London *via* Cairo and Geneva. In 1949 the Bharat Airways Ltd. was started for the external air services in the East between Calcutta and Hongkong *via* Bangkok. In addition to these a large number of foreign air services are operating at present to and across India. From 30th January 1949 the Government commenced night airmail services in the country. It has proved very popular and the Government is aiming at the carriage of all mails, as far as possible, by air service.

For the nationalisation of Air Transport the Air Transport Enquiry Committee was set up in 1950 and on the strength of its recommendations the air transport was nationalised from the 1st August 1953 and two corporations for air transport have been established in India, one for internal air services and the other for the external services of the country. Much progress has been made after nationalisation. During the first five years the air transport received attention and it was developed in two stages. The prospects for the development of Civil Aviation in India are indeed bright. Civil Aviation has not only a commercial and economic value, but it is also a powerful agency for social, cultural and intellectual uplift. Moreover, it increases international and inter-regional intercourse removing the narrow jealousies between different peoples and creeds.

Water Transport. Before the extension of the railways in India rivers were the means of transport. Boats sailed in the river Indus for nearly a thousand miles from the sea-coast to Atak, in the river Chinab for nearly eight hundred miles upto Wazirabad, in the Satlaj for approximately eight hundred miles upto Ludhiana, in the Ganges upto Kanpur and in the Jamuna upto Agra. But today these rivers are not suitable for navigation for such long distance, because no special efforts were made to develop water transport during the British rule. The increasing road and railway transport also proved fatal to the water transport. But gradually attention was paid to it and instead of boats steamships began to sail for carrying the passengers and goods in the Indus and the Brahmaputra and in the Ganges also between Allahabad and Kanpur. The steamer arrangements in the Indus and the Ganges could not last long, but it continued in the Brahmaputra for nearly eight hundred

miles upto Dibrugarh. In the South navigation in some of the rivers continues even to-day. The canals of Godawari and the Krishna and the Buckingham Canal in the Madras State are important agencies of water transport. In Orissa the canals are navigable for nearly one hundred and fifty miles. In the Western Bengal goods are carried in large quantities in boats and steamers along the rivers. In 1918 the Industrial Commission emphasised the need of co-ordinating railway and waterway administrations to relieve railway congestion and satisfy the needs of small-scale transport of the country. The Government of India appointed Otto Popper, an expert in the art of navigation and a member of the Danube Commission to investigate the river navigation in India and recommend measures to develop it.

Marine Transport and Ports. As marine transport along the extentive coast-line of India forms an important aspect in the economic life in India, the need for developing an Indian mercantile marine was deeply felt. Consequently new ports were created to provide impetus to inland and foreign trade of India during the British rule. They have been linked together with all the ports of the country by railway lines. Among these the ports of Bombay, Calcutta, Kochin, Madras and Vizagapattam are famous. Besides these, Porbandar, Bhavnagar, Calicut and Manglore on the western coast, Mandvi, Dwarka and Kandla in Kachchha, Kuddulore, Katak, Gopalpur, Kakinada, Machhlipattam, Nagapattam and Tutikoram on the eastern coast and Dhanush Kodi in the Bay of Manar in the South, twenty-one miles away from the Ceylon, are other ports that deserve mention. To provide training to the naval cadets training ships have been provided and naval training centres are created by the Government of India.

Money-lenders and Banking. Money-lending and banking have great importance in the economic life of a country. Banking in India is of two types, the indigenous banking which is peculiar to India alone and the modern banking, which is run on the western lines, is introduced during the British rule. The indigenous banking is deep rooted in the economic life of India and it has its own principles and practices. It is existing in every town and village. It is carried on by native business

community. Its members are called *Mahajan, Marwadi, Chetti, Saraf, Seth* etc. They combine banking with trading, use their family capital, finance the agricultural industry, small crafts and internal trade, and lend money to others. In big industrial or business towns and centres of commerce they have their own agents and shops to carry on their trade and banking. They receive deposits and advance loans against stock-in-trade. They command credit at different places in the country. They pay their bills not by cheques but by *hundis*. They are important constituent of the Indian money market and link it with the trading community. The East India Company in the beginning of the British rule relied on these indigenous bankers for its loans and remittances. The introduction of the modern banking system in India in the twentieth century gave a great set-back to the indigenous bankers ; but they did not wholly disappear. They are even today important in petty villages and towns. Small traders, petty artisans, ordinary labourers and persons of middle classes go to them for financial assistance. But their rate of interest is so high and their methods of realising their loans are so tyrannical that they prove detrimental to the borrowers. Consequently they have dislocated and disturbed the balance of economic life of the country.

Modern banking in India owes its origin to the British Agency Houses operating in Calcutta and Bombay in the eighteenth century. They had circulated their own currency notes and offered financial aid to the East India Company for its trade. Later on three Presidency Banks were set up, the Bank of Bengal was started in 1806 in Calcutta, the Bank of Bombay in Bombay and the Bank of Madras in Madras in 1840 and 1843 respectively. They offered loans to the East India Company and gave financial help to the English traders. The Government supervised the working of these Banks. In 1862 they were deprived of the right of note-issue but the work of the Government treasury in different towns was entrusted to them. In 1921 these three Presidency Banks were amalgamated into the Imperial Bank of India. Since 1836 the Government had been thinking to establish a Central Bank. In 1859 and 1867 the proposal for it was considered. Later on the Chamber-

lain Commission and Hilton-Young Commission recommended the establishment of a Central Bank. Consequently in 1934 the Reserve Bank of India was established and it began functioning in 1935. It not only performs the functions of a Central Bank, but issues currency notes on behalf of the Government of India, renders advice to the Joint Stock Banks, regulates their working and helps them during a period of difficulty.

In addition to the Reserve and the Imperial Banks there are branches of many foreign exchange banks and other Indian banks all over the country. There are more than fifteen foreign banks functioning in India at present. They have their head offices in England or America or Europe. They not only finance the external trade of India but take an active part in financing of internal trade and do every kind of banking business in the country. This is the most incongruous element in Indian banking system.

With the growth of Indian trade and capital a number of Indian banks have been established all over the country in the twentieth century. The Swadeshi movement provided a strong stimulus to them. In 1913 and 1914 fifty seven banks failed due to bad times. It gave a great shock to public confidence, a set-back to the habit of investment and a great injury to industrial and commercial development. Though the first world war gave a fresh impetus to the banks, the great depression of 1931-32 affected our banking system a good deal. However, banks continued to expand during and after the second world war. The partition of the country dislocated the banking system in the affected areas. After the achievement of independence Indian trade and commerce increased tremendously. Consequently banks expanded and multiplied their branches. The merchant community is utilising fully the facilities provided by modern banking. But the present banking system is inadequate for the expansion of commerce and economic organisation of a sub-contiment like India.

In addition to the Joint Stock Banks there are many Co-operative Banks in India. They have been flourishing through Co-operative Credit Societies. There are Co-operative Banks in the Punjab, Bombay, Madras, U.P., Madhya Bharat, etc. They

are meant for the agricultural development and betterment of the farmers' economic conditions.

The preceding pages give an account of the modernisation of our economic life and revolutionary changes introduced therein. Our social and religious life was also modernised and revolutionised. This marks a new epoch in the history of India. The following pages will describe it.

Social and Religious Reform Movements[1]

By the end of the eighteenth country the foundation of the British rule was firmly laid in India. Together with the establishment of the British political supremacy the storm of the western culture and civilisation began to rage violently in the country. It had effected the evolution of Indian culture. The expansion of the British Raj and the advent of the western ideas in India gave a very rude shock to our ancient religions and social organisation. We had at this time touched the lowest ebb of our cultural decadence and lost all revolutionary urge and creative powers. Towards the close of the eighteenth century we were passing through a critical and unparalleled stage of transition. On the one side there were the conservatives who clung to the superstitions and lifeless rigidity of traditions. They sought to strengthen the forces of orthodoxy. On the other hand there was gradually rising in social prominence a group of educated Indians lured by the western ideas. They looked to the West for guidance and inspiration and advocated an extreme radical policy. They tried to explain the hollowness of Indian religion and society. They could find nothing but unreason and repulsiveness in the externals of Hinduism as practised in their day. It was in such environment that Christianity and western culture were spreading with wonderful rapidity in India especially Bengal. Consequently many highly educated Bengalis in the pre-mutiny period like Krishna Mohan Bengali, Lal Behari Dey and Govind Dutt (the father of the poetess Toru

1 For details refer to *Social and Religious Movements in the Nineteenth Century* by C. S. Srinivasachari ; *Modern Religious Movements in India* by J. N. Faruqhar ; *India : Fifty Years of Progress and Reform* by R. P. Karkaria ; *Renascent India* by H.C.E. Zacharias ; *Modern Indian Culture* by D. P. Mukerji.

Dutt) embraced Christianity. Between the two extreme groups, mentioned above, arose such moderate persons who desired to proceed forward more cautiously. They came to the conclusion that their culture and religion are no less than any other foreign in splendour and excellence. They sought to remedy evils of the day by social and religious reforms. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the pioneer among them and his Brahmo Samaj was the first leading religious movement. The State had been for the most part neutral so far new reforms were concerned. Private individuals and bodies had done a good deal in the modification of our social relations, our general outlook upon life, and our religious doctrines and practices and age old traditions. The whole pattern of society and religion was changed. There were general changes in the beliefs, customs and institutions of the Hindus. Numerous reforms were introduced in the realms of religion and society. There was a wave of reforming activities in the nineteenth century, the following being the most important.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj[1]

Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833) was the son of a Brahman Zamindar Ramakant of a small village Radhanagar in Bengal. After a very liberal education which included the study of Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic and English he entered the service of the East India Company in the office of the Collector at Rangpur. By dint of his hard labour and talents he rose from the position of a clerk to that of the Dewan of a district. In the meantime he acquired the knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew and studied Christianity deeply. He had already well acquainted himself with the Hindu scriptures, the Vedas, the Vedangas, the Upanishads etc. At the age of forty he left the Company's service to devote his whole time to the service of his people and in 1814 he permanently settled down in Calcutta. Now begins the most famous chapter of his life.

Profoundly affected by the Christian teachings and European liberalism, he came to the conclusion that radical reforms were

1 Refer to *Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Modern India* by Ramanand Chatterji ; *The Brahmo Samaj* by M. C. Parekh ; *History of the Brahmo Samaj*, Vols. I and II by Sivanath Sastri.

necessary in Hinduism and the social customs and practices of the Hindus, if the country was to emerge from the slough of despondency. Its result was that he founded in 1815 a reforming institution called the '*Atmyia Sabha*', in 1819 he established the Calcutta Unitarian Committee and on the 20th of August 1828 the Brahmo Samaj. By founding the Brahmo Samaj he never sought to set up a new independent religious sect, but prepared an environment, saturated with the best teachings of all religions, in which persons of all sorts and conditions could assemble, without any distinction whatsoever, for the adoration of one God. The cardinal principles of the Brahmo Samaj were the worship of one God, the Author and Preserver of the Universe and the brotherhood of man. It inculcated respect for all religions and scriptures ; but it had no faith in any scriptures as an authority. It denounced polytheism and idol worship as sinful and opposed caste-distinctions. In fact, the new theism of the Brahmo Samaj differed from the older Theisms of India not in what it asserts, but in what it denies. Thus Raja Ram Mohan Roy rejected the barriers of caste divisions, worship of idols and sacrificial ritual and he boldly stood forth as the high priest of universalism and love. After the death of the Raja the Samaj was raised from the moribund condition by Devendra Nath Tagore and Keshab Chandra Sen. Both were men of wide culture and manifold experiences. Keshab Chandra Sen, being profoundly affected by Christianity, desired to run the Samaj according to the Christian doctrines. Therefore Devendra Nath and Keshab Chandra could never agree together. Later on Keshab Chandra was charged with inconsistency and turned out of the Samaj. Consequently the Samaj was split into two sections—the *Sadharan* (Universal) Brahmo Samaj and *Adi* (Original) Brahmo Samaj. The former was run by Devendra Nath and the latter by Keshab Chandra. For the propagation of his Samaj Keshab Chandra undertook tours and its result was the foundation of the Ved Samaj in Madras and the Prarthana Samaj in Bombay. On account of further disagreement in 1881 Keshab Chandra Sen organised a new church known as the *Navavidhan* (New Dispensation) *Samaj* whose distinguishing salient feature was formation in worship. The *Navavidhan* was

a synthesised religion. It had assimilated many principles not only from the Hindu scriptures but also from the Christian, Buddhist and Muslim scriptures. It sought to reconcile all the apparently conflicting creeds. The Brahmo Samaj's intellectual appeal, refined spirituality and active social service brought many converts to it. Our old monotheistic religion was good enough as an affirmation ; but it sadly needed a negative and antithetical turn. This is given by the Brahmo Samaj and it is the Samaj's main contribution to the religious development.[1] Though today the Brahmo Samaj is almost a spent force, it has rendered useful service to Hinduism in three ways. (i) It popularised social reforms and has done a good deal in putting down social evils like child-marriage, Sati, intemperance, polygamy, caste tyranny, etc. (ii) It prevented conversions to Christianity by creating a half-way house. (iii) It has purified the popular religion, it roused the orthodox Hindus to organise themselves and work for a revival of their religion, rather crudely at first, but with greater discrimination and knowledge afterwards.[2] It paved the path for aggressive Hinduism. Besides this, it has done an immense amount of good in developing the vernacular and popularising education by opening various educational institutions. It vigorously advocated female education. The leading lights of the Brahmo Samaj were in the forefront of the Indian awakening. Thus, the contribution of the Samaj in the domain of the Indian cultural resurgence is immense. Prof. H. C. E. Zacharias in his book *Renascent India* pays glowing tribute to Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his Brahmo Samaj and remarks that he and his Samaj were the fountain head from which all the principle reformation movement in the spheres of Hindu religion, society and politics have originated.

Though the services of the Raja were more in the fields of religious reform, but he is the pioneer for the important secular movements in the history of India. He is, in fact, the prophet of modern ideas, the first modern man in India and

1 *Philosophy of Brahmoism* by Pt. Sitanath Tattvabhushan.

2 *Renaissance of Hinduism* by S. R. Sharma.

the herald of the new age. He was the greatest Indian of his age. There was no sphere of national life—religion, philosophy, politics, education, literature, society—which was left untouched by him. He extended his reforming hand in all directions. His services to the cause of abolition of Sati and child marriage are well-known. He advocated re-marriage of widows under certain specified circumstances. He raised his voice against infanticide (the murder of female babies), offering of sacrifices and the use of image or portrait for worship. He struck the key-note of social reforms by upholding the cause of women and denouncing the rigours of the rules of the Hindu caste-system. He had thrown light on the property rights of women and intercaste marriage. He argued for the reform of Hindu law, led the protest against the heavy restrictions on the Indian press and sent petitions to the Supreme Court and the King-in-Council for this purpose. Thus he strengthened the cause of the freedom of speech. He memorialised Government against rigid oppressive land laws in written memoranda, submitted to the Joint Select Committee. He sought to safeguard the rights of the peasantry against those of Zamindari and insisted on the reduction in the rent. He argued systematically the case for the close association of the Indians in Government and recruitment in army and emphasised on the jury system in judiciary. He supported the measure to separate offices of Judge and Collector and codify the civil and criminal laws and consult the Indian jurists and leaders before framing new laws for India. He praised the substitution of English for Persian as the official language in the Courts of the East India Company. In fact, he pointed the path for reforms in administration and laid the lines for political agitation in a constitutional manner. He represented the cause of Indian liberty both in the country and abroad. He also advocated English system of education and the adoption of the western scientific studies in our educational institutions. He aided in the establishment and development of such educational institutions as the Hindu College, the English School, the Vedant College and in view of the condition of the country he pointed a new path for the progress of the nation. He argued that

the education which had been fostered by the Pandits and Maulvis was very vague and unpractical. Western education and knowledge would not only enable India to fight against the abuses and corruptions which disfigured her social life, but would lead to a truer understanding of her own culture. He was a pioneer in the realm of literature. By writing books in Bengali, Urdu, Persian, Sanskrit and English he had strengthened the literary traditions of our country and enriched our national treasure. He published in 1804 a pamphlet in Persian, entitled *Tohfatul Muwahidin*, or a Gift to Deists and in 1820 published a very remarkable book in English—*The Precepts of Jesus, the Guide to Peace and Happiness.* In 1819 he started the first Bengali weekly, '*Samwad Kaumudi*', and three years after in the '*Miratul Akhbar*' in Persian. Thus he was a pioneer in the sphere of journalism. He guided the younger generation of the Bengali writers. Nearly all the leading writers and thinkers of Bengal in the nineteenth century were the followers of Roy's Samaj. The Raja's activities and campaign gave a strong impetus to the development of Bengali prose literature and Bengali journalism. In the field of politics Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the prophet of the new age. He pointed the path for political agitation in a constitutional manner. He advocated the policy of co-operation with the newly established foreign Government and had faith in the British justice and good wishes. The liberal nationalists later on followed this policy of the Raja. The basic principles of his politics were "love of freedom, amounting to the strongest passion of his soul." He vaguely claimed in advance for us modern political rights. He had strong belief that Indians have the same capability for progress and improvement as any other civilised nation. He was the first who violating the social restriction for voyage sailed for England and there he delivered to the West India's message of brotherhood and opened the path for the future generation of India to have a close contact with the new world. He died at Bristol in 1833. All this 'justifies the claim that Raja Ram Mohan Roy laid the foundation of all the principal movements for the elevation of the Indians which characterise the nineteenth century.' He occu-

pies the front rank among the great men not only of India but of the world. He was a great social reformer, a great religious teacher, a tower of philosophical wisdom, a farsighted politician, an expert educationist, an impressing literary figure, a journalist, a constructive genius and a champion of liberty.[1] Miss Colet remarks that "Ram Mohan stands in history as the living bridge over which India marches from her unmeasured past to her incalculable future. He was the arch which spanned the gulf between ancient caste and modern humanity, between superstition and science, between despotism and democracy, between immobile custom and conservative progress, between a bewildering polytheism and a pure, if vague, theism."

The Prarthana Samaj (Prayer Society). In Maharashtra a Theistic Samaj called the Paramhansa Sabha was started in 1849. It was the first offshoot of the Brahmo Samaj in Maharashtra. Though it was a secret society it dealt with the problems of social reforms. As its influence was limited, it soon broke up in 1860. Later on a more important Theistic organisation called *Prarthana Samaj* was started in Bombay in 1867 under the lead of Dr. Atmaram Pandurang. Its objects were (1) the rational worship ; (2) the disapproval of caste ; (3) the introduction of widow marriage ; (4) the encouragement of women's education ; (5) the abolition of child-marriage and (6) other social reforms. It developed considerably under the influence of the Brahmo Samaj. The visits of great Brahmo Samajists like Keshab Chandra sen, Navin Chandra Rai, P. C. Mazumdar and Babu Mahendra Nath Bose to Bombay gave considerable impetus to the work of the Prarthana Samaj. A night school for the workers was opened and a paper called *Subodha Patrika* was started by the Samaj. Its followers devoted their chief attention to social reform such as inter-dining and inter-caste marriage, marriage of widows and improvement of the lot of women and depressed classes. They set up a foundling Asylum and Orphanage at Pandharpur and founded Night Schools, a Widow Home, a Depressed Classes Mission and other useful

[1] For details refer to *Life and Letters of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, Edited by Hem Chandra Sarkar.

social and religious institutions of this kind. Thus, the social reform activities of the Samaj were very significant and valuable. More strees was laid on work than on faith and the Samajists applied the ideal of "Love of God in the service of man". The Samaj had its branches both in Bombay and Madras Presidencies. It did not cut itself from the parent Hindu community and establish a separate sect or creed. It declared no new dispensations, nor it played with Christianity. On the other hand, 'it tried to affiliate its theism to the older theism of the Bhagavatas and the saints of Maharashtra'. While it concentrated all its attention on social reform, it did not define its beliefs clearly. It is a remarkable thing that neither the abandonment of idol worship, nor the giving up of traditional rites and elaborate ceremonies, nor violating the caste system was insisted on as an essential condition of the membership of the Prarthana Samaj. Therefore, its members continued to adhere to their respective community or sect, inspite of their heterodox opinions on religions and social reform. They could keep themselves organised and there could be no schisms in the Prarthana Samaj like those of the Brahmo Samaj. As the Prarthana Samaj was not soundly organised on clearly defined principles its activities could not be nation-wide. It had neither a wide following nor many branches, nor could it boast of any output of valuable religious literature. It suffered from a lack of developed theological thought. It was 'more learned and less emotional in its tone, and far more cautious and less radical in its policy than the chief Samajas of Bengal.' S. P. Kelkar, Shankar Pandurang Pandit, Prof. R. G. Bhandarkar, Sir Narayan Ganesh Chandavarkar and Pandita Ramabai were among its distinguished workers. But the greatest of these was M. G. Ranade.

Mahadeo Govind Ranade (1842-1901)[1]. He was born on the 18th January 1842 at Niphad in Nasik District Bombay Presidency. He was educated in Kolhapur and got his M. A. and Law degress in Bombay. He worked in the Elphinstone College as a professor and later on was appointed Oriental

Refer to *M. G. Ranade* by Kellock.

Translator to the Government of Bombay in 1866 and rose to the position of a judge of the Bombay High Court. He took most ardently to social reform, helped in establishing the Widow Marriage Association in 1861 and founded the *Sarvajanik Sabha* of Poona in 1870 and devoted its Quarterly Journal to the championing of social and political reform. He was closely associated with many reforming institutions and associations and the University of Bombay.

He was not only an eminent Judge of the Bombay High Court, but also a historian, an economist, an educationist, an ardent social reformer and one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, which owes much of its mental preparation to Ranade. He inaugurated the practice of holding yearly social conferences along side of the Congress. He was a patriot and social reformer. 'According to him there should be an all-round progress at the same time in all fields of national activity—in politics, religion, literature, education, economics, industries and social reconstruction. He himself worked for reform in all these fields with indefatigable zeal. He believed not only in the agitation for social reforms but for the industrialisation, for the encouragement of vernaculars, for more sympathetic forms of administration and for purer forms of worship.' He was deeply religious, but not theologically inclined. However, he laid great emphasis on social reforms as a part to achieve self-government. Undoubtedly he was a great leader of modern reawakening in India.

In 1884 the *Deccan Education Society* was founded under the spiritual leadership of M. G. Ranade. He inspired its workers. Persons like Gokhale, Tilak and Agarkar were its members. Their ideal was plain living and high thinking and accepting the salary of Rs. seventy five per month they offered themselves to educate their own country men. This society had a small school which in course of time developed into a prominent educational centre and now it is famous as the Fergusson College of Poona. Later on, Gokhale, one of the members of this Society, founded in 1905 the *Society of the Servants of India.* It had, like the Prarthana Samaj, taken a leading part in promoting educational and social reforms. The main principle

of the Society was to saturate the public life with spirituality. Its aim was to train national missionaries for the social service in India and to promote in all possible ways real interests of the Indians. One of its prominent members, Narayan Malhar Joshi established the Social Service League in Bombay and founded the All India Trade Union Congress to improve the deplorable condition of the labourers. Its another member and Vice-President H. Kunjuru laid the foundation of *Seva Samiti* in Allahabad for the social service. Later on the Scouts Association sprang up from the *Seva Samiti* under the leadership of Shri Ram Bajpai, a member of the Society of Servants of India. The Madras Branch of the Society directed its activities towards rural reconstruction and in Gujrat the *Bhil Seva Mandal* was set up under the leadership of Thakar to promote the welfare of the Bhils.

The above-mentioned Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj were largely the outcome of the Renaissance, producers of ideas associated with the West and they represent the Indian response to western nationalism. Far different in character were two other reforming movements which derived their inspiration from India's past and took their basic principles from her ancient scriptures. Consequently they led to the revival of aggressive Hinduism. They were the Arya Samaj and the Ram Krishna Mission.

The Arya Samaj. Dayanand Saraswati (1824-1883), a Sanyasi from Gujrat, was the first to preach an aggressive, reformed and militant Hinduism. His active career of missionary work began in 1866 and he appealed to the people by public lectures against idolatry. He founded the Arya Samaj in Bombay in 1874 and started its activities at Lahore in 1876. Like Luther he aimed at stripping Hindu religion of all its later accretions and going back to the primeval simplicity of the Vedic hymns and Upanishads. His Samaj was frankly an attempt to re-establish Hinduism on a Vedic basis. He took his stand on the infallible authority of the Veda. His watch word was "Back to the Vedas". He threw overboard the accumulated superstitions of the centuries and returned to the pure and inspired teachings of the Vedas. He tried to reconcile

the present with the past. He believed in the doctrines of Karma and rebirth and stressed the old ideals of *Brahmacharya* and *Sanyas*. He insisted on the rites of *Upanayan* and *Home*. He preached the worship of one omniscient and omnipotent God, decried polytheism and the worship of images ; he raised his voice against the restrictions of caste, child marriage and prohibition of sea voyage. He bitterly opposed the *parda* system, conservatism, illiteracy and blind faith. He condemned the *shradha* and pilgrimages but encouraged female education and remarriage of widows. He favoured abolition of untouchability, freedom of women and education through Sanskrit and Hindi. He made Hindus realise their ancient religion, glorious past, excellent culture and noble ideology and infused self-confidence in them. He tried to unify the Hindu society by introducing various reform movements. He thus took a leading part in the national reawakening. He began the *Suddhi* movement or re-Hinduising the fallen, the outcastes, the converts and other externals. The aim of the *Suddhi* movement was to realise the ideal of unifying India nationally, socially and religiously. His notable book *Satyartha Prakash*, which is a commentary on the Vedas and clearly expounds his doctrines, gave an effective strength to Hinduism which had long ceased to be a living force. Daynand preached to his audiences neither in Sanskrit nor in English but in Hindi, and wrote his works in Hindi, and thus he adopted a praise-worthy measure in the direction of constructive work for the national language and the lingua franca of the country. Besides this, his frequent use of *Swarajya* (our government), *Swabhasha* (our language) and *Swadharma* (our religion) in due course strengthened the cause of political liberation of the country. Dayanand Saraswati was a saint of divine order. He was an important base pillar of the bridge that linked the past and the present. He was a great nation builder and strong advocate of our religion and culture during the transition period extending from Raja Ram Mohan Roy to Mahatma Gandhi.

The Arya Samaj represents militant Hinduism and it is a true expression of the militant personality of its founder. It has withstood persecution as its founder Dayanand Saraswati

withstood persecution during his life-time. It took its strongest roots in the Punjab and the Uttar Pradesh. Like every reform movement of the country it sought first to purge the Hindu society of its rampant evils. But as a phase of aggressive nationalism and as a distinct expression of resistance to Christian and Islamic doctrines, Arya Samaj is very important. It has played a glorious part in the regeneration of Hinduism. It had made faith a living force in the weak-kneed, spineless and feeble minded Hindus. As a proselytising sect, with great revolutionary urge for social service, the Arya Samaj is still a significant factor in the Hindu resurgence in the Northern India. The Samaj has been running nearly fifteen hundred social and educational institutions spread all over the country. They are aiming at the abolition of untouchability, caste restrictions and rigidity, widow marriage, Shuddhi, social service, etc. The earliest educational institution of the Samaj was the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College opened as a school in 1866. The Samaj was the first to realise the educational ideals of ancient India and for the purpose founded in 1902 the Gurukul of Kangri near Haridwar (now Gurukul Mahavidyalaya). The Samaj has its branches not only in India but abroad also for uplift work and social regeneration. Thus, the Samaj's religious, social, political and educational work has gone a long way to build the national life of India.

The Ramkrishna Mission. The synthesis of the ancient or oriental and the modern or western marks the Ramkrishna mission, the last great religious and social movement which characterises the nineteenth century. The Ramkrishna Mission was started ten years after the death of Ramkrishna Paramhansa, a mystic and saint, by his own disciple Swami Vivekanand.

Shri Ramkrishna Paramhansa (1834-1886). He was born in a Brahmin family of Kamarpukur village in the Hooghly District of Bengal. He took up the task of worshipping the family deity at the age of nine and later on he became the head priest of the Dakshineshwar Kali temple where his elder brother was the chief priest. Now he was attached most to Kali. He would frequently fall into religious trances lasting for hours to

see Kali. After a prolonged mental struggle and torture, he gradually developed a consciousness in which he realised Kali and felt her existence and presence. Later on he underwent various spiritual realisations and saw Krishna and Rama. He took to the religious practices of various creeds like Tantrism, Vaishnavism, Advaitism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity and realised God through all these. To Ramkrishna religion was an all embracing spirituality. The worthiest object of life according to him is the realisation of God. It is the essence of religion to a man who has realised ; and all religions are paths that lead to the same goal. Ramkrishna deprecated all metaphysical subtleties and philosophical discussions. The one thing that is essential according to him was the intensity of yearning for God and always love of God is more significant than the knowledge of God. Ramkrishna found image worship helpful in his religious life. Divinity fills every one of the idols with His presence. But according to him image worship is only a means to an end, and not an end in itself. The end is realisation of God. His religion was a most practical one. It was concerned neither with theories and discussions nor with interpretations of spiritual passages. He came neither to destroy nor to fulfil but to bear personal testimony to the ancient truths of Hinduism. In fact he was the embodiment of all the past religious thought of India. In the words of Vivekanand Ramkrishna was 'a wonderful mixture of God and man.'

The most famous disciple of Ramkrishna was *Vivekanand* (1861-1902). He spread throughout the world the divine message of Ramkrishna. Vivekanand was born in a Kayastha family of Calcutta. He was well educated in school and college. His interview with Shri Ramkrishna and his subsequent frequent visits to him attracted Vivekanand to him. Soon he became his favourite disciple. He attended the Parliament of Religions first at Chicago in 1893 and then at Paris in 1900. In Chicago he made such a great impression by his eloquence and talent of exposition that the American papers described him as 'an orator by divine right' and 'undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions'. In Vivekanand's divine message of peace, universal brotherhood and religious toleration the

audiences in America saw new light beyond the dark hedges of sects, creeds, communities, churches and dogmas. He frequently toured and lectured in the U. S. A., England and other continental countries and established there missionary centres, the most famous being the Vedant Society in San Francisco. He founded an order of the *Sanyasis* or monks called the Ramkrishna Mission.

Vivekanand preached the message of the Vedant not only in India but abroad also. With his preaching of Vedant Hinduism stepped on to a new phase of evangelism and it is called Aggressive Hindusm by Sister Nivedita. The new spirit of aggressiveness exhibited lies in the bold exposition of the Hindu view of life. Vivekanand's militant presentation of Hindu thought and his courageous proclamation that the Vedant was the religion for all gave to the Hindus a sense of pride in their religion. He was the first to interpret living Hinduism in all its aspects to the civilised world in a way which immediately brought recognition of its greatness. His bold proclamation before the world for the superiority of the Hindu culture and civilisation infused a refreshing boldness and consciousness of inherent strength among Hindus whose attitude then was characterised with a tone of apology and inferiority towards western culture and civilisation. He raised India in the eyes of the world and therefore is called the 'patriot saint of India'. He denounced poverty, superstitions and sins, encouraged mass education and inspired people for the service of the downtrodden humanity. The Ramkrishna Mission which he had established has branches all over the world. It trains young aspirants for spiritual evolution and sends them in many fields of life for educational, religious, social and philanthropic purpose. The Mission derives its inspiration from the ancient culture of India and stands for religious and social reforms. It holds up pure Vedantic docrines as its lofty ideals. It always aims at the full development of the highest spirituality that a person is capable of. The Mission with its various branches all over India has been doing splendid and monumental humanitarian and social service by opening dispensaries, establishing schools, colleges, libraries and orphanages.

The Theosophical Society. The Theosophical Society was founded by Madam Blavastsky and Col. H. S. Olcott in New York in 1875. In 1882 it shifted its headquarters to Adyar near Madras in India and since then it extended its activities from India. It is neither a sect nor a creed, nor a communal association. Its principle aims are to establish uniformity of all religions, to explain the significance of spiritual life, to investigate truth and to spread universal brotherhood. It believes in world teachers found in the spiritual world and discovered as *avatars* incarnate ; its philosophy is inspired by the Hindu Upanishads and Sankhya, Yoga and Vedant schools of thought. Dr. Annie Besant who came to India in 1893 was its notable president. Under her the society became a force in India and it infused a new idea of self-interest, a pride in past and belief in future. The Hindu revivalist movement owes much to Dr. Annie Besant for her vigorous interpretation of the wisdom of Upanishads, the Gita, the Epics, the Puranas, the Smritis, the Dharma Shastras and the legends and traditions of the Hindu and Buddhist religions. Her remarkable exposition of the Hindu doctrines of Karma, reincarnation, immortality of soul, Yoga, *Devas* and *avatars* opened the eyes of many Hindus. Her defence of Hindu rituals, customs and practices, and her whole-hearted support of the entire Hinduism and her bitter denunciation of the scientific materialism of the West led to a widespread religious awakening among the Hindus. She sought to rehabilitate our national religion to thousands of our English educated country men. She tried to solve burning problems of India by the revival and reintroduction of ancient ideals and institutions. In 1898 she started the Central Hindu school at Banaras 'to give Hinduism a spearhead and to assure its future'. Soon it developed into a college and subsequently into the Hindu University. Her political activities for achieving independence of India and her social reforms made her a great leader and world figure.

The Theosophical Society had its branches all over the world. Through these radiating centres the Society 'made the world recognise the spiritual greatness of India and the value of the Hidden Treasures of the eastern religions—Hinduism and

Buddhism.' The Esotaric School of the Society has made Indian occultism very popular not only in India but in the West. The fundamental principles of Hinduism such as Karma, re-incarnation, Yoga and spiritual evolution have been broadcast by the Society. It has done a great deal of work not only in the revival of religion and popularisation of the Oriental scriptures in the West, but also in the organisation of industrial exhibitions, the establishment of the Indian National Congress, the spread of the Home Rule agitation, the preaching of the Swadeshi, the propagation for the social reforms like the abolition of child-marriage, parda, illiteracy and drinking, the elevation of the depressed classes, the introduction of moral and religious instructions in schools and the campaigning for the female education. Many of its educational institutions have been the centres of Indian culture and art. And above all it stands to the credit of the Society that 'at a time when colour prejudice ran high, it deliberately set its face against it and did its best to bring together men from the East and West on terms of equality and brotherhood'. On the whole Society has proved an important factor in social and religious reforms especially in South India.

The Radhaswami Satsang Movement. It was started by Shivdayalji (1818-1878), a Banker, at Agra in 1861. It was properly systematised by the Gurus following the first Guru Shivdayalji. Radhaswami signifies the Supreme Being who incarnated in human form in this world and called himself Sant Satguru. Thus, the Supreme Being manifests in the world through Sadhu Guru and so great significance is attached to the Guru in the Radhaswami Satsang. The followers of this Society recognise no temples, shrines or sacred places except those sanctified by the presence of the Guru or his relics. They do not indulge in any intoxicating drink or animal food. There are no caste restrictions. The practice of the sect is beautifully summarised in three words *Surat Sabd Yoga* ; it means the union of human soul (*Surat*) with the Spirit-Current or word (*Sabda*) coming from the Supreme Being. There is no attempt for proselytism and much of the teaching of the sect is Vaishnava in tone. All the religions, according to this sect, are one and

true. In fact the Radhaswami Satsang is a synthesis of the *Bhakti* and *Yog*. This sect has helped a good deal in the national and cultural regeneration not only by religious awakening, but by business and industrial progress, establishment of educational institutions and social service centres.

Deva Samaj. It was started in 1887 by a Kanaujia Brahmin named Siva Narayan Agnihotri. The doctrines of the *Samaj* bore resemblance to those of *Brahmo Samaj* except that it has developed a Guru cult. The *Samaj* regards the Guru as manifestation of the powers of the highest life. It is said that the Samaj is militantly atheistic.

Besides the above-mentioned prominent religious movements, there were minor sectarian reform movements. The following movements deserve mention : the *Sanatan Dharma Rakshini Sabha* was founded by a group of Hindus in Calcutta in 1873 to champion the old Hindu systems and it set up 'a Sanskrit school to counteract the new tendencies of atheism'; the *Madhva Siddhanta Onnahini Sabha* (Association for strengthening the Madhva System) was founded in 1877 by the Madhavas of South India to stimulate the Pandits of the sect to study their scriptures ; The *Ubhaya Vedanta Pravartak Sabha* was established by the Vaishnavas in 1906 to promote the study of Visishtavita works in Sanskrit and Tamil ; The *Saiva Siddhanta Sabha* of Tinnevelly was set up in 1886 ; The *Advait Sabha* was started in 1895 at Kumbakonam for the propagation of *Sanskrit Vedant,* and the *Bharat Dharma Mahamandal* of Banaras stands for the defence of the orthodox Hinduism and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya was associated with the progress of this *Mandala*. The Sikhs and the Jains also revived their religion. The former constituted the Chief Khalsa Diwan and local assemblies called Singh Sabhas to strengthen and purify Sikh life and encourage education and introduce social reform among the Sikhs. The later formed the *Bharat Jain Maha Mandal* to lay stress on the spirit of the religion.

Similarity and uniformity among the religious movements. As noted above the Hindu religion, society and culture decayed considerably in the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth. Several reformers rose in prominence to reawaken

the nation from its lowest degeneration. Each of these reformers sought to regenerate Indian society and religion in his own way. Consequently there sprang up numerous religious and social movements. But they resemble each other considerably. There main principles have a great deal of similarity. The following points will bear testimony to this statement.

All the religious movements, deriving their inspiration from Indian culture, were based on the true principles of Hinduism : they have denounced polytheism and laid emphasis on monotheism, endeavoured to purge Hinduism of superstitions, orthodoxy and other social evils, expounded the true religion, preached for the abolition of external formalism and laid emphasis on the spirituality and high tone of morality, fostered the spirit of religious toleration and thus made Indian outlook wide and generous, bitterly opposed the caste-restrictions and rigidity and the divisions of different sects, explained the glories of India's past, focussed the attention of the people on the miserable plight of the women and endeavoured for their regeneration and progress. All these movements have created in the hearts of the Indians love for their nation, religion and culture and thus added a great deal towards the awakening of the national consciousness.

Result of these religious movements. The above-mentioned religious movements brought about a nation-wide revolution in the Hindu society. A great deal of inspiration was derived from these movements for the individual and organised efforts for social reform and national welfare works. The rigid caste distinctions, the Sati system and the Parda practice, the child marriage, polygamy, untouchability, superstitions etc. gradually disappeared and widow-remarriage, female education and women suffrage were encouraged. These movements provided faith in future, purified the Hindu religion and society and thus gave birth to new India. Besides this, the new Hinduism, fostered by these movements, undertook the services of the suffering humanity. This is a great legacy of these movements.

Religious awakening among the Muslims. Though the Muslims were the rulers in the medieval period the political

power was gradually lost by them and acquired by the British in the modern age. In the beginning of the British rule they were not only deprived of high posts of trust and responsibility, but crafts and fine art also slipped away from their hands. Their old culture and education degenerated rapidly. Their religious sentiment decayed into lethargy. On account of their poverty and social evils the Muslims were deprived of English education and western culture for a pretty long time. Though their society has been free from caste distinction and untouchability, yet child marriage, polygamy and the parda have been practised for a long period. In course of time various social evils, superstitions and orthodoxy crept in the realms of their religion and society. Deriving their inspiration from the religious movements of the Hindus, the Muslims also strove hard for reforming their social and religious life. The first decades of the nineteenth century witnessed religious reform in the Muslim community in India. It resembled the reform initiated by the disciples of Mohammed Abdul Wahab of Arabia. The leaders of this religious awakening and reform in India were *Shah Abdul Aziz*, *Saiyid Ahmad of Bareli* (1782-1831), *Shaikh Karamat Ali* and *Haji Sharayatullah*. *Shah Abdul Aziz* preached to base all Muslim customs and practices on the Quarn. But the first Muslim leader who endeavoured to purge the Muslim society of social evils was *Saiyid Ahmad of Bareli*. He stood for reform in Muslim manners, customs and life and aimed at the elimination of Islamic superstitions and rituals. He laid emphasis on the unity of Godhead, denounced the worship of *pirs* or saints, advocated the abolition of anti-Islamic practices among the Muslim converts and opposed the western education. He tried to establish the supremacy of the Islam in India and excited the Muslims for crusade against the non-Muslims. This has sown the seeds of communalism in India.

Unlike the movement of Saiyid Ahmad of Bareli, the movement of *Shaikh Karamat Ali* was purely a religious and peaceful movement. He carried out an intensive religious propaganda and favoured the tenets of the orthodox and Sufi schools. He encouraged Indian Muslims to adopt western ideology and education. His field of work was Eastern Bengal and there he

helped a good deal in the cultural evolution of the Muslims. The closing years of the nineteenth century witnessed the *Ahmadiya Movement*, initiated by *Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qudian* in the Gurudaspur District of the Punjab. He was a religious reformer and established a sect. He claimed to be a messiah as prophesied in Muslim theology. The Ahmadiya movement not only opposed the missionary activities of Arya Samaj and Christianity but denounced the attempts of Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan to westernise the Muslim community. It supported the ancient traditions and customs of the Muslims like the parda, divorce and polygamy. In 1914 there was a split in the Ahmadiya sect giving rise to the Lahore party which refused to acknowledge Mirza as Messiah. Thus, there were progressive and reactionary movements for the revival of Islam in India.

But the movements of Maulvi Chirag Ali and Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan were more important than the above-mentioned ones. *Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan* (1817-1898) was a political, educational and religious reformer. Credit goes to him for a great deal of Muslim reawakening. He sought to revolutionise the Muslim society, education and religion. He aimed at the synthesis of Muslim culture and western ideology and induced the Muslim masses towards western education and culture and advocated frank social intercourse between the Muslims and the Europeans. He endeavoured to wipe out the social evils and superstitions that had crept in the Muslim society. He raised his voice against parda and slavery and favoured the emancipation of women. He denounced polygamy, fatalism and formalism. He started a monthly periodical called *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq* (Reform of Morals) in which he discussed and explained various subjects and thus he tried to arouse the Muslim masses to a sense of self-confidence and exertion. He not only reformed society but religion too. He desired to revive the real Islam and was opposed to the system of Pir and Murid as practised by the Muslims in India. He wrote a commentary on the Quran. He gave modern interpretations to Islamic doctrines in a series of Urdu pamphlets. According to him "the Word of God should be interpreted by the work of God, which lies open before all to

see." As his religious ideas rested on reason, his creed was called "Natural Religion". His religious activities led to the permeation of modern religious ideas into the Muslim community.

Besides being a social and religious reformer, he was also an educationist. He favoured the promotion of English education among the Muslims. He clearly perceived the urgency of the Muslims absorbing western education and science. He established association for the study of western science and started English schools and founded in 1875 the famous Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh as centre of Muslim culture and research. Later on it became the nucleus of the Muslim Aligarh University in 1920. Though it has been a source of enlightenment and progressive thought among the Muslims, it fostered the growth of communalism in India. Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan started the Mohammedan Education Conference in 1886. As he believed in the permanence of the British rule, he advocated unflinching loyalty to the British and dissuaded the Muslims from participating in the activities of the Indian National Congress. He did not desire Muslims to lose their individuality in the Hindu fold and be disloyal to the British. Besides being a reformer, he was a great literary figure. He was a journalist and prominent Urdu prose-writer and as noted above started his own periodical *Tahzib-ul-Akhlaq*. Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan revolutionised the religious and political outlook of the Muslims, effected boldly a change in the method and purpose of education for the Muslims and carried out vigorously social reform in the Muslim community. 'He formed, as it were, the turning point in the history of Indian Islam from the old to the new.'

Maulvi Chirag Ali (1844–1895), who helped Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan a great deal in his work, was also a reformer. He attained to a very high position in the Nizam State and was known as Nawab Azam Yar Jung. Chirag Ali appealed to the Muslims to improve their condition. He advocated reform of Muslim society and tried to establish true relation between Islam and modern sciences. He encouraged Muslims to improve the lot of women and take to western education. After Sir

Saiyid Ahmad Khan and Chirag Ali the educated Muslim classes raised their voice against child marriage, polygamy, parda and other social abuses. Shaikh Abdul Hamid of Lucknow, Mohammed Iqbal, the famous Urdu poet, Shaikh Khudabaksha and Saiyid Akbar Hussain had done educational and social work for the Muslims. But in absence of wide education and prevalence of superstitions and conservatism the pace of reform has been slow in the Muslim community. In the twentieth century and especially after the termination of the first world war Jinnah, the prominent Muslim League leader, had infused unprecedented political consciousness into the Muslims. It was based on bitter communalism and two-nation theory. Consequently India was partitioned.

Awakening in other sects. Like Hindus and Muslims other sects also felt the force of religious awakening. The Parsi community took the cause of its purification. In 1851 the *Rahnumai Mazdayasnan Sabha* (Religious Reform Association) was founded by the enlightened Parsis to reform their creed and society. Later on they started a weekly journal '*Rast-Guftar*' (Truth-teller) for the social and religious reform. Dadabhai Nauroji and S. S. Bengali were the leading Parsi reformers. K. R. Camma began the study and teaching of the Parsi scripture *Avesta* in scientific way. Two institutions were set up to train priests who would realise what the real teaching of Zoaraster was. The Parsis adopted English education, life and manners quickly. While reforming their own society and sect the Parsis have helped a good deal in the work of national regeneration. B. M. Malabari, a Parsi leader of great influence strove hard, in the cause of women and children and founded the *Sewa Sadan* for the social welfare work. Dadabhai Nauroji, Sir Firozshah Mehta, Sir Din Shaidulji and other Parsi leaders have offered their valuable contribution to the social, economic and political progress of India.

Under the influence of religious awakening the Sikhs also tried to purify their sect and society. The revivalist movement among them appeared when the Khalsa college was established at Amritsar by the progressive Sikhs about 1890. The Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee was started by the

Sikhs to get rid of the corrupt Mahants and reform the Gurudwaras. The Chief Khalsa Dewan was created as a central association and Singh Sabhas (local assemblies) were founded to purify the Sikh life to strengthen Sikh community and to promote education and social reform.

Like other communities the Indian Christians also introduced religious reform in their fold. But as they had less superstitions and conservatism they needed reform less. Rational Christian missionaries and farsighted Christian religious officials attempted to minimise the difference between various religious rites practised by the Indian Christians and endeavoured to unite them into a strong country-wide organisation. In the beginning the Christian missionaries started schools for the spread of education especially for the low caste Hindus and converted to Christianity a large number of depressed classes and aborigines. They were provided a great deal of facilities for education and were uplifted in many ways. The Christian missionaries in India have rendered valuable services to the Indian people by establishing and maintaining orphanages, hospitals, schools, colleges and other philanthropic institutions. A significant effect of Christianity was that the Indians tried to reform their religion to protect it from the attack of Christianity. The high caste Hindus also changed their attitude towards the depressed classes.

Hindu Society

While explaining the Aryan culture in the first few chapters of the book it was pointed out that the Hindu society was based on the *Varna* system. Gradually the caste system formed the back-bone of the Hindu society and the joint-family and the *Ashram* system rose in prominence. The father or the eldest male member was the head of the joint-family. He safeguarded its interests. The joint-family system was based on mutual love, sympathy, cooperation and affection. Life was divided into *Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyas* and this ideal was organised for every householder. The *Grihyasutras* and *Dharmasutras* organised society on a conscious basis. Woman was well respected in society and had enjoyed equal rights with man. But in the medieval age this social organisation of the Hindus was

dislocated considerably. It ceased to grow due to political slavery and moral degeneration. The main castes were sub-divided into many small sub-castes which were separated by wide gulfs of caste rigidity and restrictions. In the modern age caste-distinctions and rigidity increased considerably, inter-dining, inter-marriage and mutual intercourse among various castes were prohibited, untouchability gained upperhand, voyage was forbidden and those who undertook it were out-caste, illiteracy was increasing, and the Hindu society was groaning under the heavy burden of such social evils as poly-gamy, child-marriage, *sati*, infanticide, *devadasi* and parda—all practised under the influence of superstitions, conservatism and priestly craft. In fact, the Hindu society had become petrified, static, conventionalised and stereotyped.

But in the later half of the nineteenth century the Hindu society was gradually purged of its evils as a result of the religious awakening and attempts were made to restore the social and religious balance of the country. The chief factors responsible for this restoration were western education, culture and ideology, humanitarian ideas fostered by Christian mission-aries, new economic condition, easy and cheap means of trans-port and communications, growth of big towns, establishment of new manufacturing concerns and factories, agitation of the social and religious associations and institutions, schools, colleges, modern means of entertainments like cinemas, clubs, hotels and new laws and above all religious awakening and social consciousness.

It should be noted that the British Government in India had been for the most part neutral so far these reforms were concerned. The main incentive for the social reforms was provided by the indigenous reformers and saints of the modern age. In England and other European countries the movement for reforms was disassociated from religion, but the Indian movement went hand in hand with religious reform and was the direct outcome of the later force. Besides this, private individuals and bodies had played a prominent role in orga-nising social and religious reforms. The following account will bear testimony to this statement.

Soical Reforms

1. *Infanticide.* The first great social reform carried out by the East India Company's Government was the abolition of the strange unhuman practice of the infanticide—throwing a newly born child into the sea at the mouth of the Ganges, or killing young daughters by refusing proper nourishment or poisoning the nipples of the mother's breasts. The Bengal Regulation XXI of 1795 and Regulation VI of 1802 prohibited infanticide.

2. *The Abolition of Sati.* The next great social reform carried out in India was the abolition of *Sati* through the strenuous efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his supporters. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century Raja Ram Mohan Roy raised his voice against the cruel practice of the *Sati* and joined hands with the Government of the Company to suppress it. He carried on a vigorous anti-Sati campaign till the practice was declared illegal by Lord William Bentinck in 1829.

3. *Polygamy and Child-marriage.* Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first to raise his voice publicly against polygamy and his noble work was carried on by many ardent workers who succeeded him. Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar also opposed the polygamy and child-marriage. The Act of 1872, passed through the efforts of Keshab Chandra Sen, abolished early marriage, made polygamy penal, sanctioned widow-marriage and inter-caste marriages for those who chose to come under the Act. But the Act could not be very effective. The Arya Samaj and other social leaders, therefore, tried hard to get the early marriages abolished. B. M. Malabari, the greatest Parsi reformer of modern times, started agitation against infant marriages from 1884 onwards. His book *Infant Marriage and Enforced Widowhood in India* roused wide-spread discussion and did much to move public opinion. Consequently the Age of Consent Act 1891 was passed. It raised the age of perfection for marriage from 10 to 12 years. But it was bitterly opposed by the reactionaries and they raised the slogan that the Hindu religion was in danger. In 1901 the Government of Baroda State passed the Infant Marriage Prevention Act, fixing in the state the marriage for girls at 12 and for boys at

16. Later on, in 1930 the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State both passed Harbilas Sharada's Chil' Marriages Restraint Bill and it became the Sharada Act. penalised the celebration of marriage between boys under 1., and girls under 14 years. However, it should be noted that now economic and educational factors have automatically raised the marriageable age of girls and boys beyond the expectation of the reformers and legislators. Thus, the age of marriage steadily rose, plural marriage disappeared and wedding ceremonies were simplified and curtailed considerably.

4. *The Widow Remarriage Movement.* As early as the middle of the eighteenth century an attempt was made to introduce widow remarriage in the Hindu society, but it failed. It was Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, the noted educationist and reformer of Bengal (1820-1891), who launched a vigorous compaign for widow-remarriage and presented a petition to the Government of India for the purpose. He wrote a pamphlet in 1854 proving that remarriage of widow was not forbidden by the Hindu *shastras* and was even permissible and himself solemnised many widow marriages. In response to this humanitarian movement the Widow Remarriage Reform Act of 1856 was passed. It legalised widow-remarriage and legitimacy of the issue of the remarried widows. The Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj also made splendid efforts for the popularity of widow remarriage. The widow remarriage movement had its own advocates in many provinces. The first Widow's Home was organised in 1887 at Baranagore near Calcutta by Sasipada Banerji. In 1889 Pandita Ramabai started the Sarda Sadan for Hindu widows in Bombay and in 1896 D. K. Karve opened the Hindu Widow's Home Association in Poona. The Widow Marriage Association of Bombay founded in 1861, the Widow Remarriage Association started in Ahmedabad, the Maharani School of Mysore, the Purity Society in the Punjab and the Hindu Widow Reform League of Lucknow deserve mention in connection with the widow-remarriage movement. They have all made laudable attempts to improve the lot of the widows.

5. *Female Education.* The Christian missionaries and all the Indian reformers have been promoting women's education.

In the pre-Mutiny days schools for Hindu girls were being founded and Christian missionaries opened schools for their converts' daughters. After the Mutiny female education received a great impetus from the government as well as various social institutions like the Brahmo Samaj, Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society and the Ram Krishna Mission. They have given honoured place to women as teachers and preachers. The Christian women set examples to others by coming forward in large numbers as teachers, doctors and nurses. The Poona Sevasadan started by Mrs. Ranade in 1909 and the Sevasadan Society started by Mr. Malabari in 1908 have been doing splendid work in the training of nurses and midwives, the promotion of maternity and child welfare and finding of employment for widows. The Madras Medical College was the first to be thrown open to women in 1875 and the Cama Hospital was the first one to be administered only by women since its establishment in 1882. Later on in 1916 the Lady Hardinge Medical College was founded at Delhi and exclusively for women. It has been training Indian women for M. B. B. S. degree and the Maternity and Child-welfare Bureau of the Indian Red Cross Society has been rendering useful services in training women for ministering social work. Besides this, since the foundation of the Indian Women's Association in 1917 increasing interest is being taken not only in female education but in improving general conditions of women. A large number of schools and colleges have been opened for women and each succeeding day shows steady progress in this direction.

6. *The Women Suffrage Movement.* Since 1917 the women franchise movement has achieved splendid success and women have been elected as members in the various councils and corporations. Many of them were inspired with the spirit of martyrdom and have participated in the activities of the Indian National Congress. The franchise qualifications affecting them have been liberalised by the Act of 1935 and under the new constitution they enjoy all political rights.

7. *The Abolition of Parda.* Connected with the female education is the problem of the abolition of parda. Since the advent of the Muslims in the medieval period it had been

observed rigidly. Now, not only the educated Hindu ladies have discarded parda, but Muslim ladies have also begun to discard it.

8. *Discontinuance of the Devadasi system.* In the Deccan many Hindu parents used to dedicate their first born daughter to the deities and they were brought up by the temple authorities and known as Devadasis. They rendered valuable services to the temples during the time of prayers, and other temple ceremonies by dance, music, devotional songs, etc. But it led to corruption and temple prostitution. The missionaries, the Brahmo-Samajists and other social reformers raised their voice against the Devadasi or *Hierodouloi* system. Later on it was declared illegal by the Government Act in the first decade of the twentieth century.

9. *The Elevation of the Depressed Classes.* As a result of social reform movement the so-called depressed classes began to awaken from their age-long slumber to new consciousness. They have been suffering from various kinds of social, religious, political and economic disabilities. But valuable philanthropic work has been done for the abolition of these disabilities by Christian societies, the Theosophical Society, the Ram Krishna Mission and particularly the Arya Samaj. The Depressed Classes Mission Society of Bombay, founded in 1916, Gandhiji's Harijan Movement and many measures of the Government have gone to a great extent in elevating the depressed classes, promoting their education, providing work for them, removing their social abuses and disabilities, improving their economic lot, and preaching them principles of liberal religion, personal character and good citizenship. The new Constitution of India has declared untouchability penal. Liberal scholarships and facilities are being provided to the depressed classes and backward communities by the Government.

10. *Abolition of Slavery.* Slavery and serfdom were existing in India as indicated in the reports issued in the closing years of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Predial slavery was attached to large estates and in the far south field labourer was often the personal slave of the proprietor. Domestic women slaves were common in many

parts of the northern India. Children were stolen and sold as slaves and consequently there was a slave trade between Gujrat and Deccan in the early decades of the nineteenth century. But slavery in India was not like that which prevailed in Greek and Roman countries. Though various regulations were passed forbidding the stealing or kidnapping of children, rigorously prosecuting slave traders, prohibiting import of slaves from foreign countries, and their purchase and transport form one district to another, the Act of 1843 deprived slavery of its legal status by declaring that courts would not entertain claims to slaves. This Act rendered slavery illegal. All trades in slaves or possession and maintenance of slaves were finally abolished in 1860 and declared criminal offence under the Indian Penal Code.

11. *Elevation of the Primitive Tribes.* There have been primitive tribes in India from time immemorial. The Bhils and Bhilalas of Madhya Bharat, the Mal Paharias of the Raj Mahal hills, the Gonds and the Santhals of Madhya Pradesh and the Mers of Ajmer and Merwar are the prominent primitive tribes. The Christian missionaries have come into close contact with them. Under their influence the social unity of the tribes has been destroyed. Many of them have been converted to Christianity. The British administration has made the tribal strongholds more accessible to penetration and proselytisation. Consequently the western and Hindu influence and ideas have infiltered among the tribes, human sacrifice, infanticide and mutual bloody feuds are suppressed, diseases are checked, schools and social service centres are established, many professions and crafts are provided, tribal languages, traditions and manners are preserved, *begar* or forced labour is abolished and attempts are being made to improve their miserable plight.

12. *Slackening of the Caste-system.* The rigours of the caste-system have slackened considerably during the British rule. Concessions to convenience or expediency, particularly in matters of food and drink, were made. Caste conventions yielded to force of circumstances. The Caste Disabilities Removal Act was passed in 1850. It 'declared that any law or usage which involved forfeiture of rights or property or affected any

right of inheritance by reason of any person being deprived of caste, should not be enforceable in British India courts.' But this Act aimed to protect the rights of the Hindu converts to Christianity. However, inter-caste marriage and inter-dining have often been taking place and are being encouraged in different part of India and sojourns in foreign countries have long been ceased to be punished with social ostracism. Modern education, western liberalism, economic conditions, modern means of transport, hotels and clubs have relaxed the orthodoxy of the caste and have encouraged inter-dining. Civil Marriage Provisions, supplementary to the Act of 1872, have made inter-caste and inter-communal marriages easier in the country. As every one can have recourse to the law courts instead of the caste *panchayats* or tribunals, the values and imperatives of caste have lost their force. The modern conception of equalities and the application of uniform laws for the whole country have minimised the caste-distinctions. Out-casting a person is now an offence punishable by the court. Under the pressure of the economic conditions many are giving up their hereditary professions and following different new occupations freely. All these have slackened a great deal the restrictions of the caste system, but the system as such survives even today.

Education[1]

Importance of Education. The real aim of the true education is to fit a person for his work in life. Real education aims at the unfoldment of the hidden potentialities of an individual. It enables a person to understand better his rights and privileges, his duties and obligations. It makes a man worthy to play his part successfully in the political, social, economic and religious life of his country. In fact, a wide diffusion and expansion of education is not only necessary, but indispensable for the growth and development of civic life in any country.

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1 For details refer to *Indian Education, Past and Present* by Sir Philip Hartzog ; *Post-war Educational Development in India* (Bureau of Education, Government of India) ; *History of English Education in India* by Saiyid Mahmood ; *Hundred Years of Western Education in India* (Calcutta Review, 1923).

Again, education stimulates the people to adopt new schemes of reforms in every walk of life and encourages them to wipe out social evils like parda, illiteracy, untouchability, etc. Lastly, as modern government is pre-eminently a people's government, the success of a national or democratic state entirely depends upon its standard of education.

Education during the British Period

1. *Beginning of the English Education.* After the decline of the Mughal empire the progress of education in India slowed down. The establishment of the East India Company in India and its armed interference in the affairs of the native princes caused a great deal of political disorder. It had adversely affected our educational system and institutions. Inspite of establishing itself as traders and rulers in the country, the East India Company did not evolve a definite policy of education within its own territories. It was indifferent to the expansion of education among the Indians. But when the British Parliament compelled it to devote its attention to India's educational system, it tried to support the existing system—the Hindu pathshalas and the Muslim Maktabs and Madarsahs. The East India Company's Charter of 1698 had directed the Company to maintain schools in all its garrisons and bigger factories and therefore the first school of the kind, called St. Mary's Charity School, was started in Madras in 1715. But before the East India Company could follow a definite policy of education and adopt measures to implement it, the efforts of the Christian missionaries, a few officials of the Company and liberal Indians bore fruit and western education progressed. In 1725 European Christian missionaries had established seventeen schools for the children of the heretics (Hindus) and Muslims and four missionary schools for the Christians. In 1727 the first Protestant English Mission reached Madras and devoted itself to the spread of education. In 1804 the London Missionary Society established English schools in Ceylon, southern India and Bengal. No fees were charged for imparting education in these missionary schools.

Thus, the Christian missionaries came to be associated with the educational enterprise in India. They established their

centre at Serampore, sixteen miles away from Calcutta. They directed their educational activities from Serampore to convert Indians to Christianity. They set up a press there, started a paper and translated and published the Bible in the twenty-six language. Carey, Marshman, Thomas, Ward and David were distinguished persons among these missionaries. They had rendered valuable service to the cause of education in India. It was due to their efforts that the first Missionary College was set up at Serampore in 1818 and the Bishop's College was established in Calcutta in 1820 to train young Christians as preachers and to impart knowledge of the English language to the Indians.

The officials of the East India Company also played a predominent part for the spread of education. In 1781 Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of India, founded the 'Calcutta Madarsah' to qualify the sons of the Muslims through the Arabic medium for responsible and lucrative offices. In 1791 Jonathan Duncan, the British Resident at Banaras, established a college there for teaching laws, literatures and religion to the Hindus and specially to supply qualified Hindu Assistants to European judges In 1784 Sir William Jones, a judge of the Supreme Court at Calcutta, founded, with the help of Warren Hastings, the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal in Calcutta. It had done monumental work in the modern age to explain to the world ancient Indian thought and culture.

Philanthropic and liberal Indians also had done valuable work in the domain of education. Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Raja Radhakant Deo and Jaynarain Ghushal deserve mention. Raja Ram Mohan Roy formed an association for founding an institution, where the Hindus could receive instructions in European languages and sciences. The Raja together with David and a judge of the Supreme Court established the Hindu College in 1816 which later on developed into the famous Presidency College of Calcutta. In 1817 Raja Ram Mohan Roy started an English school at Calcutta to give free education to the Hindu children.

2. *The East India Company's Charter of* 1813 *and the policy*

of grants-in-aid for education. When the Charter of the Company was revised by the British Parliament in 1813, the responsibility of the Company for the education of the Indians was recognised and a sum of rupees one lac was set aside every year for the revival and improvement of literature and for the introduction and promotion of knowledge of the sciences among the inhabitants of the British territories. In 1823 it was from this amount that grants were offered to the Calcutta School Book Society and the Calcutta School Society and the Committee of Public Instruction was set up to regulate the distribution of grants. This Committee devoted its attention to the study of Sanskrit and therefore two Sanskrit Colleges were established by it, one at Calcutta in 1824 and the other at Delhi in 1825. Since 1819 the Company had been offering an annual grant of Rs. thirty thousands to the Calcutta Madarsah. Soon a college and a few schools were also started in Madras in 1816.

Thus before 1835 there existed three kinds of schools—(1) Vernacular schools, (2) Christian Missionary schools which had arrangements for the English education, and (3) the schools of the East India Company which imparted education through the medium of English or Hindi and Urdu. Till 1830 the Government of the East India Company, giving up the policy of neutrality, advocated expansion of education. Between 1823 to 1833 the principal aim of the educational system was to spread English. People liked the English medium of instruction instead of Sanskrit and Arabic medium for higher education. The work of Christian missionaries and the religious reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy had provided strong impetus to the English education. The Company also supported it because it needed young clerks, well acquainted with English, for its godowns, offices and factories.

3. *Decision for the English medium of instruction and expansion of education* (1835-1854). In the first quarter of the nineteenth century the demand for the study of English had increased and to satisfy the popular demand English classes were attached to the Calcutta Madarsah, the Sanskrit College at Banaras and the Agra College founded in 1818. In the meantime a great controversy began to agitate popular mind regard-

ing the nature of education and the medium of instruction. The Orientalists, including Wilson and others, held that the teaching of the classical languages—Sanskrit and Persian—must be the first consideration, while the Occidentalists or the Anglicists, who included Elphinston, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and his followers, advocated the imparting of western education through the medium of English language. Besides this, the necessity of cheap Indian personnel for administrative purposes was pressed home by the Directors of the East India Company. In the meanwhile Lord Macaulay, the new Law Member to the Supreme Council of Calcutta, was appointed Chairman of the Committee of Public Instruction. The deciding shot in the battle between the Occidentalists and the Orientalists was fired by Macaulay in his famous Minute of the 2nd Feb. 1835. He gave his decision in favour of English as the medium of instruction and western education—literatures and sciences—as the proper subjects of study for the Indians. Lord Macaulay laughed at the Oriental literatures and believed that 'a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia'. Lord William Bentinck, the then Governor-General, approved of Lord Macaulay's Minute and passed a resolution on the 7th of March 1835 to this effect. It decided that the object of the British was to promote European literature and science amongst the Indians and all funds appropriated for the purposes of education were to be employed on English education alone. It ended the controversy of the medium of instruction and English was declared the State language. The Governments of Bombay, Madras and the North-West Provinces (modern U. P.) followed this policy initiated by Bentinck.

The results of Bentinck's resolutions were as follows :—

1. It encouraged the growth of a definite class of English speaking Indians familiar with the western ideas. Lord Macaulay himself wanted this. He wrote in his Minute "We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the

vernacular dialects of the country...." In other words the English educated classes would in their turn educate the masses. This led to the famous 'filtration theory' which held the ground for the next twenty years.

2. Clerks were easily secured for the British offices.

3. As far as our national thought was concerned it was a great unifying factor which made the Indians conscious of their rights and duties and brought them in touch with the outer world.

As a result of the above-mentioned decision in 1835-39 twenty-three Government schools were established and in 1842 their number rose to fifty one. In 1842 a Council of Education was set up in place of the Committee of Public Instruction. But its activities were confined to Bengal. In 1844 the announcement of the Company's Government that preference in Government service would be given to the people knowing English furthered the cause of English education. During 1843-53 the Thomson Scheme was introduced in the North-Western Provinces (U. P.). Under this scheme some villages were grouped together in one unit or circle and every zamindar or landholder of the unit had to pay one percent cess on the revenue to maintain the schools in his jurisdiction. After 1853 this scheme was extended in other districts and the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras. But it lacked uniformity. In 1835 Bentinck founded a Medical College at Calcutta and the Thomson Engineering College at Roorkee and in 1852 the Madras University High school was started. The Elphinstone College was founded in Bombay in 1834, one College in Hooghly in 1836 and other colleges in Dacca, Patna and Nagpur. A few scholarships were provided in Government schools and some amount was utilised for the development of the Indian vernaculars. The Christian missions had also done a great deal of work in the field of education. They were instrumental in starting English schools at various places. They opened charity schools at Madras, the Wilson College in Bombay, the Christian College in Madras and the St. John's College at Agra in 1850 and other missionary colleges at Masaulipatam and Nagpur. But the primary aim of the

missionaries was not to educate the people, but to preach them the doctrines of Christianity and for this purpose the Bible classes were made compulsory in their institutions. As the English language helped them to spread Christianity they emphasised English education and opened several English schools.

Expansion of English education led to the wide spread of the English literature and civilisation and in course of time the Indians began to feel disgusted with their own culture. The Indian youths became mentally slaves of the English people. They began to imitate the Britishers in dress, diet, manners, language and thought and belittle the Indian things. Their originality, freedom of thought and efficiency were dwarfed. They westernised themselves and began to imitate the English blindly. This gave rise to the tendencies of denationalisation and it proved fatal for the evolution of Indian culture. Inspite of this the western education was beneficial. It marked the beginning of a new epoch in the intellectual life of India. It provided the Indians master-key to unlock the treasures of the western literature and science and thus widened their mental outlook. The spread of the English education brought the western and Indian cultures in close contact of each other. The Indians now began to experience the drawbacks of their culture and realise distinctly their social evils and superstitions. Consequently the Age of Renaissance and social and religious reforms commenced promoting the growth of political consciousness and aggressive nationalism. Gradually the demand for the constitutional reforms was asserted and the freedom struggle was launched.

4. *Sir Charles Wood's Despatch of 1845 and the expansion and progress of the English education* (1854-1882). Sir Charles Wood, the President of the Board of Control of the East India Company, drafted a scheme for the spread of education in India and sent it to the Court of Directors to execute it. He advocated the broad policy of embarking on a scheme of mass education and laid down the basis of an educational structure for the whole of India. Wood's Despatch is described as "the Magna Charta of English Education in India." It is an epoch-making change in the history of education. It enunciated the

aim of education as the diffusion of arts, science, philosophy and the literature of Europe. It proposed, among other things, (1) the creation of an Education Department under a director in every province, (2) establishment of Universities at the prominent places of the country, (3) opening of the teacher's training schools, (4) multiplication of schools and colleges, (5) establishment of new middle schools and the vernacular schools for the primary education and a comprehensive system of scholarship, (7) encouragement of female education, (8) the English language was to be the medium of instruction in higher schools and the vernaculars in the lower, (9) periodical visit of the affiliated institutions by the Government Inspectors. When the Government of India was transferred from the Company to the Crown, the Despach of 1859 reaffirmed the principles of Wood's Despatch.

Though the recomendations of Wood's Despatch were not carried out entirely, yet some of them were executed. A Department of Public Instruction was established in each province under the Director of Public Instruction assisted by deputies and inspecting officers. Prof. Dodwell remarks that as persons incharge of the Education Department were primary administrators education tended to become a matter of public administration and henceforth the Government began to mould the education policy.

Universities. In 1858 the Universities of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay were established on the model of the London University. In 1882 the Punjab University was set up at Lahore and a University for the U. P. at Allahabad in 1887. But these Universities were merely affiliating and examining bodies and not residential and teaching institutions. Each University was to have a Chancellor (who was the Governor of the Province), a Vice-Chancellor (who was to be the chief person) and a Senate which was to manage the University funds and property and frame regulations for examinations. The Universities regulated the courses of study of the affiliated colleges with a comprehensive examination system. Matriculation or Entrance Examination was the first stage after which the students were admitted in the colleges and took up Inter-

mediate, B. A. and M. A. Examinations. The affiliated colleges were divided into the first and second grades.

Secondary Schools. Next to the colleges there were secondary vernacular schools. Their medium of instruction was Hindi and Urdu and their aim was to prepare students for securing admission to University classes. It led to the increase in the number of unworthy university students. Though the number of new secondary schools increased due to the Indian private enterprise, the government spent a great deal of money on schools directly conducted by the Government itself.

Primary Schools. Primary schools were below the secondary schools. They had two divisions—lower and upper primary examinations. The standard of education differed from province to province. The Indian languages were not encouraged and private efforts did not receive sympathy and support from the State. Private indigenous schools were neglected.

There was no technical education. Though Engineering colleges were set up at Roorkee and Calcutta and Medical colleges at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, they were insignificant in view of the vastness and demand of the country. There were no arrangements for the training of teachers.

5. *The Hunter Commission and changes in the educational system* (1882-1901). In 1882 Lord Ripon, the then Governor-General of India, appointed an Educational Commission consisting of twenty two members under Sir W. W. Hunter to enquire into the manner in which effect had been given to the principles of the Despatch of 1854 and suggest measures to carry out further the policy laid down in the Despatch. The following were the chief recommendations of the Hunter Commission : (1) Slow and gradual withdrawal of the State-support and management of institutions of higher education, (2) State's greater attention to the primary education and instruction in primary schools be imparted in vernaculars, (3) emphasis on physical education, (4) giving grants-in-aid on the basis of results, (5) provisions for ordinary and special grants to the colleges, (6) emphasis upon a series of lectures on the duties of citizen, (7) introduction of vocational courses at the

higher secondary stage, and (8) preparation of moral text books based upon the principles of natural religion.

The Government of India accepted the recommendations of the Commission and it directed the preparation of an annual report reviewing the general progress of the education in India.

Effect of the university education. During the period extending from 1882 to 1901 the universities produced hundreds of graduates and thousands of matriculates. But as they could not get the expected employment, they became gravely discontented and politically vociferous.

Secondary and primary education. From 1882 onwards the history of the Indian educational policy has been an account of the progressive dominance of the universities over the schools. The School Leaving Certificate Examination system was instituted in this period and the education for crafts was started in many of the schools in the Punjab, Madras and U.P. However, secondary education did not make any remarkable progress.

In the field of primary education arrangements were made to impart instruction in the primary schools through Hindi or Urdu medium. The English primary schools were linked to higher secondary schools. The new primary schools were divided into two groups—(1) lower primary schools which imparted instruction upto class three, (2) upper primary schools which provided education from the third class to fifth class. After 1882 Local Self-Government made some progress and consequently according to the recommendations of the Hunter Commission the local self-governing institutions were entrusted with the maintenance and management of their schools. They were given some grants-in-aid by the Provincial Governments.

6. *The Age of Educational Reform* (1901-1935).

University Education. (*a*) *Lord Curzon and the University Act of 1904.* Lord Curzon, the Governor-General of India (1899-1905), endeavoured to reform the existing educational system. He followed the policy of centralisation for the Education Department and tried to place the educational system under the Government supervision and regulation.

In 1901 he called a conference of Indian educationists and administrators to discuss the problem of higher education. In 1902 he also appointed the Raleigh Commission to enquire and report on the constitution and working of the Universities and recommend measures to elevate the standard of University teaching and to promote the advancement of learning. Its recommendations were embodied in the *Universities Act of 1904*. The Act remodelled the universities on the western lines. The Government control over the universities was tightened. The governing bodies of the Universities were reconstituted. The total number of the elected fellows of the Senate was reduced and that of the Vice-Chancellor's nominated fellows was increased to an overwhelming majority. Though the number of the college teachers increased in the University Syndicates, but only the fellows of the Senates could be the members of the Syndicates. The powers of the Senates and Syndicates were reduced a great deal. The Government retained the power to turn out a person appointed by the University or cancel his appointment. Provision was made for the increased powers of supervision over existing colleges and the imposition of more stringent conditions for the affiliation of new ones. The Government was vested with the powers to affiliate or disaffiliate colleges to Universities and to define the territorial limits of the Universities. New faculties were created to deal with the University curricula and examination methods. The autonomy of the Universities was reduced so much that practically nothing was henceforth to be done without the approval of Government. As a result of the Act the Universities, for all practical purposes, had become a department of Government.

The Indian educationists criticised this Act bitterly. It promoted rigid Government control over the universities, fettered the colleges and schools with bureaucratic handcuffs and hampered Indian private effort in the field of education. It Europeanised the Senates and Syndicates and turned them into some of 'the most completely Governmental Universities of the world'. By virtue of this Act Lord Curzon asserted 'the doctrine of State responsibility and control in matters of University education'.

(*b*) *Modification and Reform.* To raise the standard of university education an Act was passed in 1906 by virtue of which attempts were made to introduce the study of sciences in universities. In 1910 the Education Department was created and in 1911 an Education Member was added to the Governor-General's Council. Soon after this the Dacca and the Patna University Commissions were appointed but their recommendations were not carried out due to the first world war and other factors. However, the constitutions of the Universities were revised and modified and they were vested with greater powers regarding teaching. Their curricula was also modified. Increased grants-in-aid were made to private institutions, new college buildings were erected and old ones repaired, libraries and laboratories were extended and developed, new classes were started, the total number of university teachers was increased and greater attention was devoted to the study of medicine, engineering, agriculture, veterinary and technical education. Female education was also encouraged.

(*c*) *The Resolution of 1913.* The Government Resolution of 1913 clarified the policy concerning the higher education. It recommended new teaching and residential universities within every province. It also laid down that the Government would maintain schools as 'models' for private enterprise.

(*d*) *The Sadler Commission.* With the lapse of time the standard of the university education became lower and consequently Lord Chelmsford (Governor-General of India 1916-1921) appointed the Calcutta University Commission in 1917 under the chairmanship of M. Sadler to investigate, among other things, into all aspects of the collegiate and university education and the problems of the Calcutta University. It recommended (1) to organise Calcutta University, (2) the establishment of a unitary teaching university at Dacca, (3) separation of Intermediate classes from the university work under the boards of secondary and intermediate education, (4) the formation of Three-year Degree Course, (5) special attention to the female education and the creation of a Board for the purpose, (6) vocational and professional training, and (7) the use of

vernacular for the medium of instruction upto High School stage and English in the universities.

Though all the recommendations of the Commission could not be enforced by the Government, they were forwarded to the Provincial Governments in 1920 for translating them into practice. On the strength of the Commission's recommendations other universities constituted Committees on whose suggestions teaching universities were established and Boards were set up for the High Schools and Intermediate colleges. By the Act of 1919 education in the Provinces was made a transferred subject and it was placed under an Indian Minister responsible to the legislature. However, the Government of India guided the general policy of higher education.

(e) *Increase in the total number of universities.* Universities were established at different places on account of political consciousness, expansion of education and local and communal sentiments. During the period extending from 1917 to 1922 the total number of universities rose from five to fourteen. Local patriotism led to the establishment of Patna, Lucknow, Rangoon and Andhra Universities. Banaras University was founded for religious sentiments, Aligarh University for communalism and Dacca for both religious and communal feelings. Mysore University, Usmania University, Agra University, Tagore's Shantiniketan and Indian Women's University at Poona were established in this period.

Secondary education. With the spread of education the secondary schools were increased and developed. But they lacked technical education.

Primary education. During the Governor-Generalship of Lord Curzon it was recognised in 1904 that the expansion of the primary education is an important duty of the Government. Its result, therefore, was the spread of primary education in the country. With the growth of political consciousness and national awakening, Gokhale introduced a bill in 1913 to make primary education compulsory and free in the Imperial Legislative Council, but it was rejected. It was declared in 1912 to increase the total number of primary schools by 75 per cent. After 1919 the Provincial Government passed new rules and regulations for

educational policy. They empowered the Municipalities and District Boards to introduce free and compulsory primary education within their jurisdiction.

The Hartzog Committee. When in 1922-23 the Indian Statutory Commission was constituted to enquire into the progress of the Indians, this Commission appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Sir Phillips Hartzog to report on the growth of education in India. The Committee offered very valuable suggestions to improve the education considerably but they were not executed.

7. *The Age of new educational schemes* (1935-1955). Under the Government of India Act 1935 the entire education was put under the charge of the Provincial Governments, except a university which functioned in two Provinces. But education could not be improved either quantitatively or qualitatively. Therefore, attempts were made to introduce radical changes in the educational system of the country.

The spread of the defective university education and the University Commission 1949. In the period under review (1935-60) new universities were established, for example Travancore, Utkal, Sagar, Rajasthan, the Eastern Punjab, Gauhati, Poona, Roorkee, Kashmir, Baroda, Annamalai, Gujrat, Karnatak (Dharwar), S. N. D. T. Women's University (Bombay), Shri Venkateswara (Tripuri), Jabalpur, Gorakhpur and Vikram universities and today we have thirty-six universities in India. Though the number of university students increased considerably, they were not fully benefitted by this education. For all practical purposes the university education has been useless. It has been the education of head and not of hand or heart. In absence of technical education and high academic standard our universities instruction woefully failed. With the exception of a few universities the study of sciences and various kinds of research have been comparatively neglected. Besides this, there has been deterioration in discipline and teaching. Therefore, after the political emancipation the Congress Government had instituted a University Commission in 1949 under the chairmanship of Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. The following were its chief recommendations :—

(1) Indianisation of education with all its ingredients, (2) establishment of rural universities with Shantiniketan and Jamia Millia as their models, (3) admission of the capable students in the universities and technical education for the rest, (4) establishment of tutorial classes to ensure close personal contact between teachers and students, (5) increase in the Research Fellowship, grants for scholarships and stipends for the poor and needy, (6) compulsory study of Hindi, (7) better scales of salaries for teachers, (8) establishment of many technical institutions, (9) refresher courses for teachers, (10) substitution of first Degree Course of three years, (11) co-education in the primary schools and colleges but not in the secondary schools, (12) raising high the standard of education, (13) introduction of Objective Test in place of modern examination system, (14) careful planning of lectures, supplemented by tutorials, seminars, library work and written exercises, (15) remodelling of training colleges for teachers, and (16) promotion of student-welfare. For the purposes of coordinating University education, the establishment of a University Grants Commission was recommended. But all the recommendations of the Commission could not be carried out yet.

University Grants Commission. It was set up in Nov. 1953. Its primary function is to take steps for the promotion, development and coordination of the University Education, and for the determination and maintenance of proper standards in teaching, examination and research. It is also entrusted with the task of allocating funds to the Universities and guiding the expansion of University education on right lines.

Secondary education. After 1935 the secondary schools increased considerably, but there has been a great deal of wastage and quality was sacrificed at the cost of quantity. The academic standard could not be raised. A few schools here and there started the classes for spinning, weaving, smithy, book-binding, carpentry, etc. But traditional literary education continued to dominate. No attempts have been made for the cultural and mental progress of the students. Education was not closely and actively identified with the social, cultural and economic needs and purposes. It laid more stress on the mere

theoretical knowledge. In 1937 when the Congress Ministries were formed attempts were made to reform the education.

During the second world war in 1944 the Central Advisory Board of Education published the report of the *Sergeant Commission*. Sir John Sergeant, the Educational Advisor to the Government of India, prepared the scheme. The following were its chief recommendations :—

(1) Pre-primary education for children between 3 and 6 years of age ; (2) universal, free and compulsory education or basic education for boys and girls between the age of 6 and 14, divided into two stages, the junior basic stage covering five years and the senior basic stage covering 3 years, (3) restrictions on the admission of students both in High Schools and colleges; only those were to be allowed to join them who were expected to profit from higher education, (4) inclusion of the Intermediate course into the High School course and the first College Degree course for three years, (5) provision for the proper training of teachers, (6) provision for compulsory physical education, mid-day refreshments and medical inspection, (7) development of libraries and social and recreational activities. The Sergeant Scheme could not be put into practice due to lack of finances. However, every Provincial (now State) Government has been trying to modify and reform the secondary education to suit the needs of the younger generation and many experiments are being made for the purpose.

Secondary Education Commission, 1952

The proper organisation of Secondary education is very important as it aims to bring about a far-reaching social, cultural and economic revolutions in the country. Hence the Government of India appointed Secondary Education Commission in 1952 with Dr. A. Lakshmanaswami Mudaliar as the chairman. It submitted its report in 1953 and therein recommended a reorientation and reorganisation of Secondary Education with a view to introduce vital changes in the curriculum and the examination system. Following are its main recommendations :—

1. Education of High School stage should commence after four or five years of primary or junior basic education and

should consist of such diverse studies as language, social studies, general science and craft.

2. Regional language should be the medium of instruction while the national language and a foreign language should also be taught at the middle school stage.

3. In matters of public examinations and promotion, school records should be taken into consideration.

4. Multi-purpose schools should be opened to encourage technical education at an early stage.

5. There should be seperate grades of training for secondary school teachers and for graduate teachers.

6. There should be Boards of Secondary Education, boards for teachers' training and state advisory boards.

7. Every school should have a managing board registered under the Companies Act with Head Master as ex-officio. These recommendations were accepted by the Central Advisory Board of Secondary Education in November 1954.

All India Council of Secondary Education

In view of the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission, the Government of India has set up All India Council of Secondary Education in August 1955. Its chief functions are to review periodically the progress of Secondary Education in the country and to serve as a body of expert educationists for the purpose of advising the State and the Central Governments on the improvement and expansion of Secondary Education in all its phases.

New pattern of Secondary Education

The Central Advisory Board of Education and the Conference of Vice-chancellors held in 1955 considered the recommendations of the Secondary Education Commission and after much deliberations recommended a pattern of education which would comprise

I. Eight years of integrated Elementary (Basic) Education,

II. Three years of Higher Secondary Education with diversified courses.

III. Three years of University Education leading to the first degree of the University. The Ministry of Education, Government of India has accepted this pattern of education and

has launched it all over the country. Consequently High Schools have been converted into Higher Secondary Schools for three-years courses and three-years Degree courses have been introduce in the Universities.

Social Education

A new concept of social education has evolved recently. It has a five-point programme, namely—

1. literacy to adults ;
2. a knowledge of the rules of health and hygiene ;
3. training for the improvement of the adults' economic status ;
4. a sense of citizenship with an adequate consciousness of rights and duties ; and
5. healthy forms of recreation suited to the needs of the community and the individual.

The responsibility of executing this programme rests with the State Governments, the Central Government offers financial assistance and guidance. The Central Government has appointed a standing committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education on Social Education to advise the Central Government and State Governments in matters of social education.

To provide impetus to social education the Government of India awards annually prizes for the best books for Neo-literates, in all regional languages, prizes to authors of outstanding books for children, organises "literary workshops" to train authors to write for neo-literates, has set up National Book Trust to encourage production of good literature and to make such books available at moderate and reasonable prices, has been subsidising publications of good books and foreign classical books, for children and recently Children's Book Trust is set up for the purpose by the Government. A National Board of Audio-Visual Education is established to provide modern facilities for children's education and seminars have been organised by the Government on this project from time to time. As libraries play important part in the social education, the Government of India have introduced an Integrated Library Service Scheme for the Community Centres and educational institutions. Measures are also being taken for the general Library service. The

State Governments have set up State Libraries and District Libraries in their areas.

Primary Education

Primary Schools multiplied considerably. Local Committees and education boards which controlled and regulated the primary education were abolished. Soon after this primary education has been made free and compulsory in different provinces. The Education Department of every state has taken over the responsibility of establishing and maintaining the primary schools, providing for their periodical inspections, trained teachers etc. One of the important development in the field of primary education in recent years has been the acceptance by the Central and State Governments of Basic Education as the national pattern of elementary education for children. The conception of Basic Education was initiated by Mahatma Gandhi. Basic education is imparted through productive or creative activities in the form of crafts and it centres round the physical and social environments of the children. Only such crafts as have importance from the intellectual point of view and provide scope for progressive development of knowledge and practical efficiency are chosen for providing basic education. In 1949 the Central Advisory Board of Education has also prepared a scheme for the free and compulsory education. The Indian Constitution incorporated a directive that state should endeavour to provide free and compulsory elementary education for all children up to the age of 14 years.

All India Council for Elementary Education

But the progress in the field of primary education has been very slow due to various causes. The Government of India have established on the 1st July 1957 All India Council for Elementary Education to accelerate the pace of progress further and to fulfil the directive principle of the Constitution. It will also advise the Government of India, the State Governments and the local bodies on all matters pertaining to elementary education and produce literature to help officers of the Education Department and the teachers to improve the quality of elementary education. It will review periodically the progress made in the field of primary education.

Vocational Education : Technical, Commercial and Art Education

Vocational education is that education which equips a person with such knowledge, skill or capacity as directly helps him to take to some art or craft or industry as an occupation and means of livelihood. The general education, imparted in the present system of education, helps very little to solve life's practial problems. It does not equip citizens for different occupations of life. In fact, during the British rule little attention was devoted to the technical, commercial and art education in India. Though some technical institutions were established, but they have been inadequate in view of the needs and population of the country. In 1936 the Government of India invited from England two experts of technical education and constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Abbott to recommend measures for the promotion of technical education. In 1946 the All India Council for Technical Education was constituted consisting of representatives of the Central and State Governments, Parliament and Associations in the field of commerce, industry and labour. Its main objective is to advise the Government on the development and coordination of technical education above the High School stage. The Council has prepared a scheme to strengthen and improve existing non-government institutions. It aims at the establishment of a chain of national laboratories in the different parts of the country, starting of technical institutions raising their standard, and provide additional equipment and facilities for an increased number of students.

Today the Government have adopted a constructive and purposeful policy to develop technical education facilities on the widest scale possible. Praise-worthy efforts are being made in the field of technical education. Several new technical institutions like the Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, the Indian Institute of Science Bangalore, the Delhi Polytechnic, higher technical institutes in Bombay, Madras, Kanpur, etc. have been established. Engineering colleges for Degree and Diploma courses have been set up in all the states. Scholarships are provided to many for technical education abroad.

The Central Government have set up the Central Educational and Vocational Guidance Bureau in 1954. The State Governments are setting up similar bureaus in their regions. The main objective of these bureaus is to provide educational and vocational guidance with other agencies.

Education of the handicapped. In Sept. 1954 National Advisory Council for the education of the handicapped was appointed to advise the Government of India on all problems relating to the physically and mentally handicapped and to formulate new schemes for the purpose. It resulted in the establishment of schools for the blind, deaf and dumb and for the mentally handicapped, and the evolution of a common Braille Code for Indian languages known as the Bharati Braille and production of Braille literature in Indian languages.

Physical Education. The Government of India have recently established a Central Advisory Board of Physical Education and Recreation to advise on the co-ordination of all programmes and activities in the field of physical education and recreation. It has submitted to the Government a national plan of Physical Education and Recreation and therein offered valuable suggestions for the purpose. It has resulted in the establishment of a National College of Physical Education with facilities for three years degree course. It is known as Lakshmibai College of Physical Education at Gwalior. In 1954 All India Council of Sports was set up to advise the Government on matters pertaining to the promotion and improvements in the field of sports. This Council has initiated many schemes such as Coaching Camps, Construction of Studies, Guest Houses etc. Labour and social service camps have also been organised to inculcate the dignity of manual labour into students and at the same time providing opportunities to young persons to get acquainted with village life and conditions. Camps are held every year in rural areas to construct roads, build dams, tanks, reservoirs, dig wells, pits, widen and clean lanes in the villages.

Adult education. Adult education concerns itself with educating further the ill or half-educated adults. It aims to

widen their intellectual horizon and enlarge the range of their curiosity. Adult education is not only necessary but indispensable for the establishment of democratic and responsible government and its successful working in India. Effective education is essential for the adults for social, political, economic and cultural reasons. The Royal Commission on Agriculture in 1926 and the Royal Commission on Labour in 1930 have emphasised the need of adult education as the basis of improvement. Various new schemes for adult education have been launched both by the Central and State governments to introduce radical changes in the outlook of adults, to infuse enthusiasm and awaken new thought in them. There is an all India body for it. The Central Advisory Board has also offered its recommendations for the promotion of adult education. Recently the adult schools and libraries have been developed.

Female education. Female education is essential for political, social and economic progress of the country. We cannot have an educated manhood and ignorant illiterate womanhood. Illiteracy of woman effects not only home life but personal and national character and makes daily life miserable. Female education was liberally encouraged in ancient India. It received setback in the medieval age. But the Indian Renaissance in the nineteenth century provided strong stimulus to female education. Before the Government could promote its growth a few Christian missionaries and preachers and liberal Indian leaders like Radhakant Deo, Baijnath Roy and Raja Ram Mohan Roy strove hard to spread female education.

As a result of the efforts of the Law Member of the Governor-General's Council and Pandit Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar first girls' school was established in 1849. Lord Dalhousie offered grants-in-aid to the girls' schools. Charles Wood's Despatch of 1854 laid down the policy of grants-in-aid for female education. But in 1867 it was declared that the girls' schools should depend more on the private enterprise than on the state support and financial aid. However, in 1870 the girls' schools received liberal grants from the State in the Punjab, Bengal, Bombay and U. P. In 1882 during the governor-generalship of Lord Ripon the Hunter Commission recommended special encourage-

ment to female education. Consequently the Government offered greater grants to female education and started new government girls' schools. This led to the wide spread of female education within a few years.

Besides the efforts of the Government and Christian missionaries, successful attempts have been made by many non-official philanthropic bodies and religious societies like the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society and Servants of India Society to encourage the cause of female education. Distinguished Brahmo Samajists like Keshab Chandra Sen, Sashipad Banerji, Mrs. J. C. Bose and Mrs. P. K. Roy took measures for female education. Many members of the Brahmo Samaj started such papers as *Bam Bodhini*, *Abla Bandhava*, *Antahpur* and *Bharat Mahila* to spread culture and education among women. The Arya Samaj also rendered valuable services to the cause of female education by establishing *Kanya Gurukuls* (Girls' High Schools) at many places. Gradually *Mahila Vidyapith*, *Seva-sadan*, Girls' High schools and women's institutions for handicrafts were founded for the education of women in big towns. The Deccan Society of Education also played a prominent role in spreading the female education. Most of the districts today have more than a high school for girls. As a result of the successful attempts of Karve and Bhandarkar, associated with the Fergusson College of Poona, the Indian Women's University was started at Poona in 1916. A few women's colleges have been opened in India. Recently the All India Women's Conference laid great emphasis on the female education and started an All India Women's Fund for spreading female education. Besides this, the Kasturba Trust is also offering substantial help for this noble cause. Local self-governing institutions like District Boards, Municipalities and Corporations have established many institutions for girls' education. Political consciousness and social re-awakening of the country have also provided strong stimulus to female education and today women are receiving education in universities and colleges. But the female education in India, being influenced by the western culture and civilisation, lacks the lofty noble ideology of Indian culture. However, the progress of female

education was confined to the cities ; adequate facilities are not offered for girls' education in rural areas.

Various experiments of educational systems. Various periodical experiments have been made in the field of education in other countries of the world. But during the British rule the Education Department of the Government of India pursued a particular settled policy and education has been considerably influenced by the western culture and civilisation. It failed to satisfy the needs of the country, times and society. It has been purely academic with no moral or ethical aim behind it. No sincere attempt has been made to develop character and provide opportunities for creativeness and originality. Private educational institutions imitated the Government models. But the Arya Samaj was the first to educate according to the ancient Vedic style and therefore it established *Gurukuls.* A few other institutions like the *Prem Maha Vidyalaya* (Brindavan) gave technical and vocational education together with academic. Later on original plans have been formulated to overhaul the entire system of education. Independent experiments were made in the field of education in Tagore's Shantiniketan at Bolpur near Calcutta. In Gujrat Dakshinmutri had made original new experiments in the field of child education at Bhavnagar. His experiments bear the impress of Madam Montessori's educational system. Many institutions adopted the Dalton Plan and the Kindergarton System for child education. In the meanwhile the Theosophical Society invited in 1939 Madam Montessori to India and spread widely the Montessori system of education. Madam Montessori had herself conducted Montessori teachers' training centres at various places in India and established new Montessori schools for children. But all these experiments and systems with their ideology have been foreign to our country. They failed to relate closely to the practical needs of the nation as a whole. Therefore, Mahatma Gandhi formulated a scheme of education in view of the needs of the country. It is called the *Wardha Scheme* or *Basic Education.* The aim of the scheme is to train children for life, 'learning and doing', with the intention of bridging and ultimately superseding the distinction between the brain worker and the

manual labourer. Education is centred on small crafts life weaving, smithy, agriculture, etc. and other subjects are taught indirectly in the light of principal crafts. Numerous schools for Basic Education have been recently established all over the country. It is expected that the scheme of Basic Education will remove illiteracy, solve the problem of unemployment and help a great deal in the progress of the society and nation as a whole.

Since August 15th, 1947 Education has been constituted into separate Ministry of Education at the centre New Delhi. Though education is a subject of the State Government, the Union Government and its Ministry of Education are responsible for the administration of institutions of national importance for scientific or technical educations, financed wholly or in part by it. The Union Government through the Education Ministry is also responsible for the administration of four Universities, namely, Banaras Hindu University, Aligarh University, Delhi University and the Visva Bharati and many other institutions of higher learning. The departments of the Archaeological Survey of India, Anthropological Survey of India, National Archives and National Library, Calcutta are under the Education Ministry. The Union Government also deals with agencies and institutions for (1) professional, vocational or technical training, (2) promotion of special studies and research, (3) scientific or technical assistance in the investigation or detection of crime. The State Governments are fully autonomous in regard to educational matters except in respect of educational development programme for which they get grants-in-aid from the Central Government. The authority of Government in regulating and controlling the system of public instruction is in part shared with and in part delegated to Universities and Boards of Secondary Education as regards University and Secondary education, and to local self-governing institutions as regards elementary education in some states. Institutions which are under private management are controlled by Government and the local bodies by "recognition", and by the system of grants-in-aid, with the assistance of inspecting officials employed by Government and by local bodies.

Literature[1]

With the social and religious awakening Indian vernacular literatures have developed remarkably well. The following factors are responsible for this :—

1. Many Sanskrit works have been translated into English by western scholars during the renaissance period. The study of Sanskrit awakened a keen interest in India and the lost story of India's greatness and glories was reconstructed. The Indian intelligentsia and the middle classes have come to know Indian culture through English language. Consequently the Indian vernaculars have been fully utilised to express the different trends of Indian culture and the glories of India's past.

2. The revolutionary urge to introduce reform in all walks of life and all spheres of society has provided new inspiration to many in the realm of literature.

3. Contact with different foreign countries and the study of the literatures of the western countries led to the remarkable changes in vernacular literatures. The spirit of modernisation began to penetrate into the domain of vernacular literatures. Mr. R. C. Dutt observes that "The Hindu intellect came in contact with all that is noblest and most healthy in European history and literature and profited by it."

4. The establishment of settled government and peace and order in the nineteenth century provided opportunities to Indians to think and express their noble ideas in literature.

5. Wide-spread English education has introduced new ideology and western thought in the vernacular literatures.

6. The predominence of secular outlook, the upsurge of national spirit and the patriotic ferver have brought in new trends in all spheres of literature.

7. The revolt against old literary conventions, urge to make new experiments in literary forms and techniques including the remarkable change in the metrical patterns, progressive thinking and modern movements expressed in the translations of western books and adoptation from the English literature all

Please refer to *A History of India Literature* by M. Winternitz ; and *Modern Vernacular Literature* by Grierson.

have gone a long way to develop and enrich the vernacular literatures of India.

8. Expansion of the press not only helped the multiplication and circulation of newspapers and periodicals and books but widened the knowledge also. It paved the path for literary development.

9. The Christian missionaries devoted their attention to the development of India's vernaculars to preach the doctrines of Christianity to the masses. They established printing press for Hindi, Bengali, Gujrati, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu etc., wrote their grammar and published small pamphlets and books in the language of the masses.

Sailent features of the literary development. The above-mentioned factors led to the marvellous literary developments in Indian languages. Various branches of literature—novel, story, drama, prose, poetry, essay—were enriched. This literary development has three stages. First, those who were the product of English education followed the western literary trends in Indian literature and translated many English books into Indian languages. They did not change their thought and style. Second, after sometime Indianisation of literature commenced. Various branches of literature progressed but the taste, thought and style of the literary figures continued to be influenced by the West. Indian drama, poetry, novel, story etc. betray the influence of the English literature. One-Act play, Blank Verse, Sonnet, Ode and mysticism in Indian literature bear testimony to the statement. The Western prose style deeply influenced the course of development of Indian prose. In fact, our prose literature begins with the translation of English books. Gradually it was modelled on the style of the western prose and themes.

Third, with the advent of the twentieth century national awakening and the freedom struggle introduced the sentiment of patriotism in Indian literature. National spirit and patriotic fervour deeply impressed the evolution of literature and consequently some of the best works were composed in this period. Rabindranath Tagore was the pioneer in this field. In the first quarter of the twentieth century Indian languages acquired

variety, flexibility, natural flow, clarity, sweetness, intellectuality and modernity. Their vocabulary increased considerably. Therefore various subjects and different trends of thought could easily be expresed in the Indian languages. Today we see in Indian literatures an attitude of realism and an angle of world vision as against as narrow nationalism of the immediate past. Besides this, the feelings of frustration and revolt against traditionalism, conservatism and capitalism were expressed in literatures. We shall describe in brief the growth of modern Indian languages.

Hindi. Though Hindi possesses a rich past, its literature takes the modern shape in the closing years of the nineteenth century. In the present age Hindi has been secularised and enriched a great deal. Its prose was developed, new thought and new vision were introduced, all the spheres of life were touched and the spirit of nationalism permeated all branches of literature with creative spirit.

In the nineteenth century *Khari Boli* has largely replaced *Brij Bhasa* which has dominated the course of Hindi literature in the past. The first quarter of the nineteenth century witnessed the beginning of the Hindi prose and Lallulalji and Sadal Mishra wrote their prominent works *Sinhasan Battisi* and *Nasiketovyakhyan* respectively. In 1809 New Testament and later on the complete Bible was published in Hindi in 1818 by the Christian missionaries. Dr. John Gilchrist, the principal of the Fort William College, Calcutta, provided a great stimulus for the systematic study of Hindi and publication of books in Hindi. The printing press of the Fort William College and that of Delhi founded in 1837 made the publication of Hindi books easier. The Christian missionaries rendered notable contributions to the development of Hindi and they were the first to write and publish school and college text books in Hindi. The Fort William College of Calcutta played important part in the formation of modern Hindi prose. Lallulalji, Sadal Misra, Insha Allakhan and Munshi Sadasukhlal gave Hindi its present form. Raja Ram Mohan Roy started his paper *Bangduta* in Hindi in 1830, Jugulkishore *Udant Martanda* in 1827 and Raja Shiva Prasad *Banaras Akhbar*

in 1846. At this time two groups sprang up, one in favour of pure Hindi led by Raja Shiva Prasad (1824-1895) and the other in favour of Hindustani or Urdu form of Hindi led by Raja Laxmansingh (1826-1896). But Bhartendu Harish Chandra (1831-1886) shelved this controversy by laying the foundation of pure, clear and systematised modern Hindi. He is called the father of modern Hindi literature. Being a remarkable man of versatile genius he wrote poetry and prose with felicity. He wrote original dramas like *Chandrawali*, *Andher Nagri*, *Satya Harishchandra* and *Bharat Durdasha* and translated in Hindi Sanskrit dramas like *Karpur Manjari Mudraraksha*, etc. He edited papers, wrote poems, essays and histories.

He raised *Khari Boli* to the level of literary language. He evolved Hindi prose and developed a new style and by his books inspired the younger generation of writers. Pratap Narain Mishra, Upadhyay, Pandit Badrinarain, Lala Shri Niwas, Pandit Balkrishna Bhatta and Gadadharsingh were the prominent authors who followed the traditions of Bhartendu. Pandit Pratap Narain Mishra was noted for his humour in his essays. Balkrishna Bhatta also became famous as an essayist and critic.

Now Hindi enters in the second period of its development ranging from 1869 to 1894. Hindi inclined more towards Bengali in this age. Many Bengali works were translated in Hindi. Great attention was paid to its grammar and purity of language. Mahaveer Prasad Dwivedi (1864-1938) was the pioneer in this field. He fostered the growth of Hindi literature and dominated it far nearly half a century. Under his inspiration Hindi developed its power of expression and modern technique. Mahavir Prasad Dwivedi was the first to commence elaborate criticism in Hindi and later on Mishra Brothers and Padam Singh Sharma wrote notable works on the art of criticism. This age is famous for the translation of English, Sanskrit and Bengali dramas and novels in Hindi. Devaki Nandan Khattri (1861-1923) and Kishorilal Goswami (1865-1932) had written original novels.

Besides this, the Arya Samaj and other institutions for education and social service took leading part in the propagation of modern Hindi. In 1894 Babu Shyam Sunder Das, Pandit

Ram Narain Mishra and Thakur Shiva Kumar Singh established Kasi Nagri Pracharini Sabha at Banaras to propagate and enrich Hindi. As a result of this a large number of Hindi dramas, novels, essays, histories and books on criticism and science, and many periodicals were published. In short, the Nagri Pracharini Sabha has developed Khari boli literature in all its variety and gave it a definite shape.

By the end of the nineteenth century Hindi had departed from medieval eroticism and had taken the modern form with simple and intelligible prose. With the advent of the twentieth century a new epoch began and Hindi literature was considerably enriched in all its branches. Though in the beginning western influence was perceived in drama, novel, essay, criticism and poetry, but gradually original works were written. In the field of novel and short stories great works were written. Early Hindi novels were depicting romanticism or thrills and magical situations. Devaki Nandan Khattri who excelled in such novels gained great popularity and his novels *Chandra Kanta* and *Chandra Kanta Santati* were widely read in the early years of the twentieth century. Another notable fiction writer was Goswami. If Khattri was the pioneer of detective fiction, Goswami was the first to introduce the study of human character in the Hindi novels. Among the later novelists Premchand, Jaya Shankar Prasad, Jinendra Kumar, Bechan Sharma Ugra, Chandi Prasad, Sudershan, Vishwambhar Sharma Kaushik, Chatursen Shastri and Rai Krishnadas deserve mention. But Premchand is the most famous of all. His advent is epoch-making event in the art of Hindi novel writing. His novels and stories had masterly descriptions of the real domestic and social life of the middle and lower classes. He raised his voice through his works against social evils that prevailed in the country during the first quarter of the twentieth century. He depicted rural life in all its aspects with realism. He was the first to introduce down-trodden peasants and landless field labourers in his works. He was unsurpassed in characterisation and themes of his novels and stories. His polished language had a mass appeal, his style was realistic and technique remarkable. He has enjoyed inter-provincial and international

reputation. His most famous novels are *Rangbhumi*, *Sevasadan*, *Godan* and *Gaban*. They are the treasures of Hindi literature. His short stories are compared with the best stories of Tagore, Tolstoy or Maxim Gorky. Recently socialist and communist ideology is being depicted by Illachandra Joshi, Yashpal, Upendranath Ashka and Ajneya in their novels. They have also written psycho-analytic novels. Brindabanlal Varma has written historical novels like *Mrignayani*, *Gad Kundar* and *Jhansi ki Rani*. In the field of drama Bengali plays led the way in the beginning and the Bengali dramas of D. L. Roy were translated in Hindi. But Badrinath Bhatt, Govind Vallabh Pant, Seth Govind Das, Makhanlal Chaturvedi, Baldeo Prasad Mishra, Jaya Shankar Prasad and Harikrishna Premi purified Hindi drama of eroticism and wrote original works. Prasad and Premi are the most famous modern dramatists. *Skand Gupta*, *Janmjey ka Nagyajna*, *Dhruvaswamini* and *Chandragupta* of Prasad and *Raksha Bandhan* of Premi are considered to be the most famous modern Hindi dramas. Prasad depicted in his dramas in ? brilliant and realistic way the social, political, philosophical and cultural conditions of ancient India. He was a master of the dramatic technique. He is considered the greatest Hindi dramatist of our age. Many poets and dramatists have also written one-act-plays. Ram Kumar Varma and Pant have gained great popularity in this field. A new school of literary criticism and essay came into existence. It is led by Mishra Bandhus, Lala Bhagwandin, Ramchandra Shukla, Shyam Sundar Das, Varma, Hazariprasad Dwivedi and Dhirendra Varma. They have written good works on criticism and essay.

Till the end of the nineteenth century *Brij Bhasha* was the vehicle of Hindi poetry. But Bhartendu purified *Brij Bhasha* for poetry and Lala Sitaram, Jagnnathdas Ratnakar, Sridhar Pathak, Shri Viyogi Hari and Lala Bhagwandin followed the old traditions of composing poems in *Brij Bhasha*. They built up the treasure house of the Brij Bhasha poetry. But with the advent of the twentieth century a group of poets rose in prominence writing poetry in Khari Boli. The first leading poets of Khari Boli were Ayodhyasingh Upadhyaya, author of *Priya Pravas*, Ramcharit Upadhyaya, the writer of *Ram Charit Chinta-*

mani and Maithili Saran Gupta, the author of *Saket* and *Yashodhara.* Maithili Saran Gupta has been the poet laureate of Hindi. His works are noted for purity of language, sweet melody of verses, mysticism and synthesis between the old and the new literary trends. He is considered the representative poet of the age. After the first world war Hindi poetry developed *Rahasyavad* and *Chhayavad.* The influence of Hindu religion and philosophy, and poets like Kabir, Jayasi, Mira, Shelley, Keats and Wordsworth have promoted the growth of *Rahasyavad* and *Chhayavad*, a kind of progressive mysticism, romanticism and idealism. Shri Jaya Shankar Prasad, Suryakant Tripathi 'Nirala', Sumitranandan Pant and Mahadevi Varma are the distinguished poets of this new school. Prasad's poetic talent manifested in *Ansu*, *Lahar* and *Kamayani* which is perhaps the greatest epic of the last half century. This epic depicts in a brilliant and masterly way man's eternal struggle against fate and destiny and his ultimate emancipation from the worldly shackles in the realisation of Divine Power or God. 'Nirala', a master of free verse, is best in his poem *Tulsidas*, a masterpiece of philosophical writings. Sumitranandan Pant's poetic genius has flowered most in *Pallava*, *Gunjan*, *Yugant* and *Yugvani* and that of Mahadevi Varma in *Yama.* Pant's *Pallava* is the high watermark of romantic mysticism in Hindi. He is unique in Hindi poetry as a creator of symphony. He is the best lyric poet of Hindi literature. His poetry is noted for its sweet melody and neo-humanism and spiritualism. On account of her pathos and depth of feeling Mahadevi Varma is looked upon as a modern Mira, and 'a nightingale of modern Hindi poetry'. Tagore's influence led to the growth of prose-poetry in Hindi and the best writer of prose lyrics of the present age is Shrimati Dineshnandini Dalmia. Recently Freud, Marx, Elliot and western 'isms' have moulded the opinions of the younger generation giving rise to idealism, revivalism, symbolism, neo-mysticism, *halavad* and socialism in the field of Hindi poetry. Poets like Suman, Navin, Dinkar, Bhagwati Charan Varma and others represent these new trends.

Hindi journalism made rapid progress in the last twenty-five years. A large number of Hindi periodicals and newspapers

have appeared on the scene. Recently there have been some outstanding contributions to the studies of indology, philosophy, history, psychology, economics, sociology and various sciences. Rahul Sankrityayana, Dr. Motichand, Dr. V. Agarwal, Bhagwatsharan Upadhyay, Bhagwandas Kela and Jaychand Vidyalankar have written monumental works in Hindi on indology, history and civics. Ramdas Gour, Dr. Bhagwandas and Sampurnanand have enriched Hindi literature by writing on religion and philosophy. Similarly Dr. Satya Prakash, Dr. Gorakh Prasad and M. P. Srivastava have written in Hindi on various sciences. Biographies and autobiographies are also appearing in the field of literature. Recently successful attempts are being made to coin new scientific and technical words to facilitate the task of writing original works on various aesthetic, scientific and technical subjects.

After the political liberation the government of U. P. declared Hindi in devnagri script as the state language and the Governments of Bihar and Madhya Pradesh followed the example. Under the new Constitution of India Hindi is declared the national language of India and today it is being spoken by the largest number of Indians. It has, therefore, a very bright future for development.[1]

Urdu.[2] The progress of Urdu is closely associated with the rise and fall of the Mughal emperors. During the period of the Mughal decadence Urdu poets like Dard, Soj and Sauda gained a great deal of popularity. Sauda was noted for his *Qasidas* (humorous poems) and Mirtaki for his *Ghazals*. Saiyid Insha Allahkhan (1757-1817) who flourished in the reign of Mughal Emperor Shah Alam (1759-1806), composed poems in Hindi as well as Urdu. He was a versatile genius and devoted

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1 For details about Hindi literature refer to *Modern Hindi Literature* by I. N. Madan ; *Hindi Sahitya ka Itihas* (Hindi) by Ram Chandra Shukla ; *A Critical History of Hindi Literature* (Hindi) by Dr. Ram Kumar Varma ; *History of Hindi Literature* by F. F. Keay.

2 For details about Urdu literature refer to *History of Urdu Literature* by Rambabu Saxena ; and *Urdu Sahitya ka Itihas* (Hindi) by Brijratnakar Das.

his thought to various subjects like music, social manners, sciences, fine arts, prose-poetry, etc. He made successful attempts to introduce simple, easy, direct and popular imagery in Urdu prose. Humour dominated his works. Shah Alam himself composed poems in Urdu under the pen name "Aftab". The last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah (1837-1858) was a patron of Urdu and wrote poems under the name of 'Jafar'. Ghalib (1797-1869) and Zauk flourished in the Mughal court at Delhi. Zauk gained name and fame for writing *Gazals* and *Qasidas*. Ghalib was a poet and philosopher. He had "originality in thought, expression, similes, metaphors, imageries, vocabulary and construction." He occupies a high rank in Urdu prose and poetry.

After the decline of the Mughal emperors many Urdu poets and writers sought refuge in the court of the Nawabs of Oudh at Lucknow. Soon Lucknow became a flourishing centre of Urdu literature. Nasikh and Atish were the distinguished poets of the Nawabs' court. In course of time Lucknow became famous for *Marsias* or elegies which are recited or sung in memory of departed persons. *Marsias* are brilliant specimens of Urdu literature. They have a unique place in literature. They promoted the growth of long poems depicting in a brilliant way natural scenes and human emotions. Anis, who was a born-poet, and Dabir of Lucknow were famous for their Marsias.

After the political extinction of the Nawabs of Oudh Lucknow lost its literary importance and Rampur rose in prominence. Nawab Yusuf Ali Khan and Nawab Kalba Ali Khan of Rampur were great learned scholars and poets. They were liberal patrons of Urdu also. After Rampur, Hyderabad, Bhopal, Patna, Tonk, Farukkhabad, Murshidabad, etc. became famous centres of Urdu literature. In the modern age English education and literature influenced the growth of Urdu. Now Urdu poetry was given a new turn. It was secularised and modernised. New themes were selected by the poets. *Musddas* and *Masnavis* had taken the place of *Ghazals*. The advent of Mohammed Azad (born about in 1832 at Delhi) and Altaf Hussain Ali (1837-1914) marks a new epoch in the history of Urdu literature. Azad occupies a unique place in Urdu litera-

ture. He broke new ground in history, literary criticism, form and subject-matter of poetry. He led a new school of poetry and credit goes to him for organising *Mushairas* (literary recitations). He was a poet as well as a prose-writer. Hali also holds a high rank in Urdu literature as a poet, critic and prose writer. Hali's poetry depicts social problems. It has realism tinged with idealism. In the field of poetry Akbar Allahabadi (1846-1921), Dr. Sir Mohammed Iqbal (1876-1938), Hafiz Jalandhari and Josh Malihabadi deserve mention. Akbar was the representative poet of his age. His poetry was comic in technique and witty in substance. He followed the classical school of poetry—literary, ornamental and learned. But Dr. M. Iqbal had done most valuable work in revolutionising life's outlook and suggesting solutions for social problems. He had depicted in his works his philosophy of self-assertion and self-development. A new turn to Urdu poetry was given in the twentieth century by Iqbal. He is regarded as a poet of the first rank. His early poems were full of liberal nationalism but his later works were tinged with narrow communalism.

The growth of modern Urdu prose commences with the establishment of the Calcutta Madarsah in 1780 and the Fort William College of Calcutta founded in 1800. Dr. Gilchrist, the principal of the Fort William College, got Urdu text books written by scholars. He is called the father of Urdu prose. When Urdu replaced Persian as the language of law, administration and records in 1839, it spread widely in northern India. The publication of Urdu newspapers furthered the cause of Urdu. Ghalib and Sir Saiyid Ahmad Khan and a distinguished band of scholars (Hali, Shibli, Zakaullah, Nazir Ahmad, Azad, Soshar, etc.) gave a great impetus to the development of Urdu prose in the later half of the nineteenth century. Letters and criticism of Ghalib are famous. He started a new prose style full of wit, pathos and directness. Sir Saiyid Ahmad developed the language of journalist and wrote essays on various subjects in stirring language. He holds a unique place in Urdu literature. His successful attempts made Aligarh the centre of Urdu literature. Besides this, Maulvi Altaf Hussain Hali and Maulana Shibli had also rendered valuable contributions to

the growth of Urdu prose. Shibli introduced well-balanced literary and historical criticism. In due course Lucknow became a centre of flourishing Urdu prose. Pandit Ratan Nath Sarshar and Maulvi Abdul Hamid enriched Urdu by their novels. Pandit Ratan Nath Sarshar adopted a new style in his fictions. He introduced fiction phraseology, remarkable word-pictures, brilliant and appealing dialogues, dramatic situation and wonderful characterisation in Urdu novel. Maulvi Abdul Hamid wrote historical novels with wonderful power of imagination. Maulana Mohammed Hussain and Munshi Nawal Kishore rendered valuable services to the cause of Urdu in Lucknow. Contact with the West led to the development of drama in Urdu and gradually historical and social dramas appeared in large number. Bengali, Hindi and Marathi dramas were also translated. Betab, Kashmiri, Tulsidatta Saida, Harikrishna Jauhar, Munshi Jagan Kishore, Ibrahim, etc. are famous Urdu dramatists. In the field of novel and story, besides translating works from Hindi, Bengali and English, original works were also composed. Nazir Ahmad, Azad, Sarshar, Mirza Mohammed Hadi, Munshi Dhanpat Rai (Premchand) etc. are noted novelists and story writers. Urdu journalism had also made considerable progress.

After the first world war Urdu literature began to reflect realism or progressivism, though some writers followed traditionalism. With the rise of urgent economic and social problems realism became more pronounced and even aggressive. Munshi Dhanpat Rai became the torch bearer of progressive Urdu literature which aimed to establish close contact with the life and social problems of the common people. The Aligarh Muslim University has been directing its energies to further the cause of Urdu. The Usmania University at Hyderabad, by making Urdu medium of instruction, has done a great service for the progress of Urdu. The Anjuman Tarakki Urdu, an association at Aurangabad, has been publishing very good Urdu literature. These have been infusing great hopes and expectations for the future growth of Urdu in India.

Bengali.[1] Bengali already possessed a highly developed literature. In the beginning of the eighteenth century in the western Bengal the court of Raja Krishnachandra of Nadiya or Navdvip was adorned by many Bengali poets—Ramprasad and Bharat Chandra Roy, the author of *Ananda Mangal* and *Vidya Sundar*, were the most distinguished among them. In this very age in the eastern Bengal Jaynarain Sen and his niece Anandmayi gained great popularity in the court of Raja Vallabh of Vikrampur. Vaishnavic traditions had enriched Bengali. It remained devotional in content and poetic in form down to the eighteenth century when the prose ushered in modern age. Prose was adopted as the vehicle for the spread of Christianity by the missionaries and for the intellectual awakening of the Indian Renaissance. Thus, the growth of Bengali prose begins from the early nineteenth century. The Christian Missionaries of Serampore (Carey, Marshman and Ward) and the Pandits and Munshis of the Fort William College have made successful attempts to create Bengali prose literature. They had written many Bengali text books on various subjects. The expansion of Bengali printing press and journalism facilitated the growth of Bengali prose. But during the early decades of the nineteenth century Raja Ram Mohan Roy devised a powerful prose style and so he is called the father of the modern Bengali literary prose. But his prose writings had predominance of persian words. Pandit Iswarchandra Vidyasagar (1820-91) purified Bengali prose and made it more refined with the use of Sanskrit words. Akshay Kumar Datta also enriched Bengali prose with his essays. Vidyasagar and Datta were famous prose writers and essayists who wrote with considerable force and grace on various topics of educational and social reforms. Many talented prose writers who were the members of the Brahmo Samaj like Maharsi Devendranath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen, Dvijendranath Tagore and Pandit Shivnath Shastri produced a religious and philosophical Bengali literature of high merit.

By the middle of the nineteenth century British rule and

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1 Refer to *History of Bengali Language and Literature* by D. C. Sen; and *History of Bengali Literature in the Nineteenth Century* by S. K. De.

western education introduced radical changes in the dress, diet, manners, customs and outlook in Bengal. This led to the social reform and created national fervour. Henceforth Bengali literature began to reflect it.

The first great prose writer and novelist of Bengali literature was Bankim Chandra Chatterjee who had a happy synthesis of the old and new in his works. He was the founder of the new style and exponent of a new idea. He made Bengali polished and magnificent, capable of expressing noble thought and lofty ideology. He wrote famous romances and social and political novels. It is in his novel *Ananda Math* that he wrote the famous national song of India *Bande Matram*. R. W. Frazer considers Bankim Chandra Chatterji as the first great creative genius of modern India.[1] His novels are a revelation of the inward spirit of Indian life and thought. They have 'the romanticism of Sir Walter Scott and the perfervid emotionalism of renascent Bengal'. In the field of fiction Rameshchandra Datt, Shrimati Svarna Kumari Ghosal, Tarachandra Ganguli, Pandit Shivnath Shastri and others have attained great success after Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. In subsequent years Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra Chatterjee held the field of fiction. They have become world famous. Sarat Chandra was pre-eminently a teller of tales with social import. His novels are real pictures of Bengali social life. He excelled in characterisation especially of women for whom he had deep compassion and sympathy. His novels have been so popular that they are translated in other Indian languages and are widely read. In recent times a group of progressive novelists who claim to depict a real picture of the masses have risen in prominence. B. B. Bandopadhyay, B. C. Mukerji, T. S. Banerjee, Gopal Haldar and Satinath Bhaduri are the noted novelists. In the domain of essay Kaliprasanna Ghosh, Rajkumar Chatterjee, Chandranath Basu and Rabindranath Tagore have added to the variety of Bengali literature by their notable works. The Bengali drama, *Kulina Kulasarvasva* was written by Ram Narain Tarkaratna in 1854. After Michael Madhusudan Datta, the

[1] *Literary History of India* by R. W. Frazer, p. 420.

writer of *Tillottama* and *Sarmistha*, Dinbandhu Mitra, the author of *Nila Darpan*, and Girishchandra Ghosh, Amritlal Bose and Dwijendralal Roy have added to the richness, variety and power of Bengali dramatic literature. Tagore developed the mystic play. The dramas of Roy have been translated in other Indian languages and staged at many places. Biographies and autobiographies are also abundant in Bengali literature. Maharsi Devendranath Tagore and Rabindranath Tagore have written their own biographies, while Nagendranath Chatterjee, Mahendranath Vidyanidhi, Jogendrachandra Basu and others have written the biographies of distinguished personalities like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Vidyasagar, Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandi, etc.

In the field of poetry Bengali is rich enough. Michael Madhusudan Datt introduced Blank Verse and Sonnet in Bengali poetry. He composed his monumental epic *Meghanada Vadha-Kavya* in the heroic style. He excelled in the power over words and was noted for his deep feeling for humanity. The tradition that he created was ably maintained by Hemchandra, Girishchandra Ghose, Biharilal Chakravarti, Navin Sen, Ranglal and Kamini Roy. Subsequent writers reverted to the lyric for which Bengali, because of its sweetness, is a medium par excellence. But Tagore surpassed all these. In creative imagination, gorgeous description, remarkable originality, universal vision and keen appreciation of beauty in all its aspects Tagore is unique. For more than half a century he shaped the literature of Bengal and profoundly influenced the evolution of other Indian languages by his dramas, novels, short stories, songs, lyrics, essays, etc. His *Gitanjali*, a collection of short devotional verses, had secured for him the Nobel Prize for literature in 1913. By his works and artistic activities Tagore had brought international recognition of India and Bengali language. He was a great revivalist and interpreter of the spirit of Indian culture and civilization. His poetry reveals to us that nature is the revelation of God. Credit goes to Rameshchandra Trivedi for writing simple, direct and appealing Bengali language on science and philosophy. Abnindranath Tagore's autobiographical works, Satinath Bhaduri's fictions, Achintya Kumar Sen-

Gupta's experiments with the dialect of East Bengal Muslim villagers, Premankur Atarti's *Mahasthavira Jatak* and Shrimati Bani Ray's works have introduced new style in writings and new substance for themes. Numerous Muslim writers have rendered their notable contribution to Bengali literature. The soldier poet Kazi Nazrul Islam started the revolt against the traditional literary forms. Jasimuddin, Kazi Abdul Wadud and Saiyid Mujtab Ali also scored success in Bengali. Some Bengali writers have produced remarkable works in English prose and poetry, for example Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Madhusudan Datt, Toru Dutt, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, H. N. Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, etc.

Marathi. Marathi has a rich literary traditions dating back to more than six centuries. But modern Marathi has developed after 1800. It owes its inspiration largely to English literature.

The growth of modern Marathi literature is divided into three parts—the first period from 1818 to 1874 ; the second period from 1874 to 1934 and the third from 1934 onwards. The first period is noted for the creation of first dictionary, first grammar and first novel. It was the foundation age. The second period was dominated by Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar. He is regarded as the father of the modern Marathi literature. He laid the foundation of Marathi prose literature. By writing essays in his journal *Nibandhamala* he had revived Indian culture and literature in Maharashtra. He used essay as a powerful instrument of social awakening. Credit goes to him for removing diffidence in the field of Marathi literature and creating faith in oneself and belief in future. As the age is marked by the rise of national sentiment and religious and social reform, the Marathi literature began to reflect these trends. Nationalist journals like *Kesari*, *Maratha Sandesh* and *Kal* were started and Bal Gangadhar Tilak appeared on the scene. Tilak's essays in the *Kesari* and his *Gita Rahasya*, Agarkar's essays in *Sudharak*, social and political novels of Haribhau Apte and Shripad Kolhatkar, critical essays of Shivram Paranjpe in *Kal*, and the historical works of Vishwanath Kashinath Rajwade have added to the richness and

variety of the Marathi literature. But N. C. Kelkar has enriched Marathi most by his essays, poetry, dramas, histories etc. He ranks very high in Marathi literature. Marathi drama contains rich treasures of which the whole of Maharashtra is very proud. There are historical and social plays, tragedies and farces. Many of the Marathi plays deal with the social and political problems of the country. But domination of music is a characteristic of the Marathi stage. The prominent playwrights are Kirloskar, Deval, Khadilkar, Kolhatkar, Gadkari, Varerkar and Atre. Kirloskar was the father of modern Marathi drama and Khadilkar 'towers head and shoulders high above others in the Marathi dramatic literature.' Recently one-act plays are gaining popularity.

In the early stages of literary development European and Sanskrit stories and fictions were translated in Marathi. With the development of other branches of literature, novel and story made remarkable progress. Romantic, fenciful and historical novels were written by Vishnu Shastri Chiplunkar, Vishnu Janardan and N. V. Bapat. A large number of Bengali novels were also translated. But the novels of Hari Narain Apte and Prof. N. C. Phadke mark a new epoch in the field of fiction. Apte was the most powerful Marathi novelist who wrote historical romances as well as novels on contemporary social life. V. M. Joshi has written a few novels but has greater insight into life than other novelists and portrays brilliantly the social and political problems of his age. S. V. Kelkar, Khandekar, Sane Guruji and Madholkar are among the more popular novelists. In the realm of short story H. B. Apte was the father of modern Marathi story. He was followed by other famous story writers like Gurjar, N. H. Apte and Deshpande. Gradually socialism, realism, rationalism and progressivism have been introduced in short story. Kolhatkar, V. M. Joshi, Phadke and Khandekar are responsible for this epoch-making change. Of late new authors like Arvind Gokhale, Bhave, Madgolkar and Gangadhar Gadgil have enriched the Marathi short story both in form and content.

Like prose Marathi poetry had also two groups—(1) orthodox and classical school, and (2) modern and progressive

school. Tilak, Vinayak Savarkar, Kelkar, Paranjpe, Chandra Shekhar and Khadilkar followed the orthodox school, while Keshav Suta, R. G. Gadkari, Anand Tambe, Thomare and others represent the progressive group. Savarkar's poems are tinged with heroism and intense aggressive nationalism. Keshav Suta liberated Marathi poetry from the traditional forms and content and therefore he is called the father of modern Marathi poetry. Balkavi Thomare was the poet of nature. Music and melody, word-pictures and romanticism have harmonious blending in Thomare's poetry. Girish, Yashwant and Madhav Julian, members of the Ravikiran Mandal, have enriched Marathi poetry. They have written romantic poetry. Julian is famous for his themes of love, Yashwant for his lyric poetry and Girish for his sentiments and revolutionary urge for reform. Of late Kusumagraj or Shikhadkar, Rege, Balmardekar and others have been expressing varied experiences in a more realistic vein and therefore their poetry has mass appeal.

Within last two decades the literary trends in Marathi are towards love, romance, socialism, sur-realism, dominance of psycho-analysis, scientific inquisition, universal outlook, atheism, etc. A notable trend in Marathi literature today is the publication of dictionaries and best books on various subjects like economics, history, politics, commerce, banking, law, sports, journalism and literary criticism. D. B. Parasnis, D. S. Karve, V. K. Rajwade, Bhandarkar, M.G. Ranade, Sardesai and C. R. Vaidya have written famous histories. They have encouraged research work in history. Vinoba Bhave, Gadgil, Kalelkar, Jog, Phatak, Kulkarni and Vatve have written original works on literary criticism. Kelkar, Oak, Ranade and Savarkar have been the authors of good biographies of distinguished persons. B. G. Tilak, V. S. Khandekar, N. C. Phadke and Madgolkar have been noted for their original thinking.

Gujrati.[1] In the eighteenth century Gujrati literature could not make much progress on account of the political disorder and the unsettled condition of Gujrat, caused by the

[1] *Milestone in Gujrati Literature* by Krishna M. Jhaveri.

Maratha expeditions and predatory bands. However, the traditions of the saint-poets were maintained. The learned Sadhus, devotees of the Swami Narayan sect, established by Sahjanand in Gujrat, enriched the Gujrati poetry. Premanand and Brahmanand, the saints of this sect, were famous poets. The devotional songs or *Bhajans* of Brahmanand are popular in Gujrat even today. The tradition of the saints promoted the growth of *Garbha* literature in Gujrat. Garbha is a fascinating dance performed by the young girls and women. Poets like Vallabha and Haridas have written Garbha literature on Krishna, Amba or Kali (Goddess). Bhagat (Saint) Dhira was a distinguished poet of Gujrati. His verses known as *Chabkas* are even today recited in Gujrat and Saurashtra. Like Tulsidas of Hindi Girdhar had composed the Ramayan in Gujrati in the middle of the nineteenth century. The traditions of saint-poets were carried on by saint-poetesses like Diwalibai, Radhabai, Krishnabai, Puribai and Gauribai in the closing years of the nineteenth century. Dayaram (1777-1852) was a noted poet of Gujrati in the middle of the nineteenth century. He is compared with Hafiz of Persian literature, Sur of Hindi and Byron of English. It is said that he had composed two hundred books and thousands of verses in Gujrati. He is the last representative poet of classical orthodox school. He followed the old technique and style. He produced love lyrics of excellent quality. His verses called *Gurbis* are recited in Gujrat with a keen interest and taste. A large number of heroic ballads (*Dohas* and *Sorthas*) were composed by many poets and writers of Gujrat and Saurashtra. They occupy a unique place in Gujrati literature. But modern Gujrati poetry begins with Narmada Shankar and Dalpat Ram. The poetry of Dalpat Ram exhibits his poetic genius and noble ideology. He excelled others in his description of beauties of nature in poetry. His language was very easy appealing and impressive. Narmada Shankar was a versatile genius. He raised his voice against the orthodox school of formalism and traditionalism in Gujrati literature. He introduced new technique of form and content both in prose and poetry. But the most distinguished poet of Gujrati is Nandlal, called the Tagore of Gujrati

literature. He is noted for his sweet and melodious lyrics. Today there are many young poets of established merit. Their poems bear unconventional features and realistic sense.

The beginning of English education and the impact of western literature in the middle of the nineteenth century provided strong stimulus for the growth of Gujrati prose literature. Organised efforts for the promotion of Gujrati were made after the foundation of Gujrat Vernacular Society by Forbes in 1848. The Christian missionaries wrote Gujrati text books and translated the Bible in Gujrati. Later on Ranchor Girdhar Bhai endeavoured to get text books written in Gujrati for schools. But modern Gujrati prose begins with the advent of Narmada Shankar. He is the maker of modern Gujrati. He introduced new themes in his works. His book *Ragrang* is a work of high literary merit. Next to him was Navalram. He was a great literary critic and successful prose-writer. Credit goes to him for purifying the Gujrati language and making it refined and polished. In the field of balanced criticism he holds front rank. Sir Ramanbhai and Dr. A. S. Dhruva were other great literary critics, noted for their balanced views. Though dramas were written by others, but Ranchorbhai Udayaram has raised drama to high standard of literary excellence. In the field of novel Nand Shankar Tulja Shankar gained great popularity. He was the father of the modern Gujrati novel. His historical novel *Karn Ghelo* is famous in Gujrati literature. Another famous novelist was Gordhan Ram Tripathi, the author of *Sarswati Chandra* which graphically depicts the contemporary social life. Other important and noted writers of Gujrati are Narsinharao, Manilal, Kanhaiyalal Maniklal Munshi, Ramanlal Basantlal Desai, Dhumraketu, Chandrabadan Mehta, Mahadev Desai, Chunnilal and Balwantrai Acharya. They produced works which are marked by deep and serious thought. Among these Kanhaiyalal Munshi is the most prominent literary figure. He has enriched Gujrati literature by his novels, criticism, short stories, social dramas, essays, biographies, etc. He is compared to Carlyle in language and style. He made Gujrati language elastic, terse and vigorous and tried to make the form perfect. It is said

that he ushered in the golden age of modern Gujrati literature. He has brilliantly revived the ancient glories of Gujrat in his novels. He is compared to Walter Scott in the field of novel. He excels in the characterisation. His famous novels are *Prithvi Vallabh*, *Kautilya*, *Jai Somnath*, *Bhagwan Parsuram* and *Patan no Prabhutva*. Parsis have also contributed to the growth of Gujrati. Khabardar, a great parsi poet, was reputed for his mastery over metres and grace in poetry. Credit goes to him for introducing blank verse in Gujrati. Mahatma Gandhi holds a pivotal position in Gujrati because of certain simplicity in his expression which helped to bring literature into life of the common man Gandhiji's letters, correspondence, essays and autobiography introduced a new age of simplicity, clarity, vigour and original and independent thinking. Posthumous publication of Mahadev Dasai and Gandhiji continue to enrich Gujrati literature. Kaka Kalelkar and Kishorilal Mashruwala followed Gandhiji's literary traditions. Contemporary Gujrati literature includes many translations from English, Bengali, Marathi and Hindi literatures. Today Gujrati literature has assumed a progressive form unshackled by tradition. It is marked by a great deal of creative energy tempered by realism. A striking feature is its charming variety.

Tamil. Tamil is the richest language of all the Dravidian languages of the Deccan. Though prose existed in Tamil, but original works were lacking. Some of the Jain works provide examples of ancient Tamil prose. Modern prose works were started by a Jain monk Virya Muni and Arumuga Nalvar. The Christian missionaries have rendered valuable services for the growth of Tamil literature. The Jesuits printed the first Tamil book in 1571 A. D. and the missionaries published the first Tamil journal '*Tamil Patrika*' in 1831. Father Beschi endeavoured to write in prose. Many Tamil books were published in Rome during the eighteenth century. Protestant missionaries followed the example and translated the Bible into Tamil. This inspired the Pandits and they brought out the prose versions of the ancient Tamil classics. Anumuga Nalvar is famous among these latter. He simplified prose and was the first to write, edit and publish in Tamil almost all the classical books of the

past. His example was followed by many other writers. Though novels with religious and didactic themes were written by V. P. P. Mudaliar, Rajan Iyer, Sarvan Pillai and A. Madhaviah, but Kuppuswamy, Suryanarain Shastri, Pudumaippittan and Kalki are celebrated novelists. Pudumaippittan is famous not only for romantic *puranic* tales but also typical fables of today in picturesque and realistic dialect, while Kalki is noted for his historical novels. Among the distinguished prose writers of Tamil Srinivas Ayangar, Srinivas Shastri, Rajgopalachari and Prof. S. Vaiyapuri Pillai deserve mention. Among the dramatists we have Samband Mudaliar, Madhaviah, F. G. N. Iyer, Parthasarathy and Sundaram Pillai. Mudaliar was not only a versatile playwriter but translator of dramas and reformer of dramatic art.

The greatest Tamil poet of the nineteenth century was Ramalingaswamy whose songs and verses are still recited by the people in the South. Other distinguished poets of the age were Vedanayangam Pillai, a Christian, and Kunan Kuti Mastan, a Muslim. They were followed by Subramia Bharati. He was a great poet, essayist, short story writer and translator. He 'freed Tamil from the affection and pedantry of the Pandits, the religiosity of the Puranas and obscurities of arid, theological posing.' It was he who introduced in Tamil literature modern literary trends, forms, shapes, realism, vision and the whole spirit of the modern age. There was no modern innovation in form, content and style that was not commenced by Bharati. He was a national and represenative poet whose stirring language made a direct appeal to the masses. His writings still dominate the thought of men and women of South India and have become perennial source of inspiration to guide them in life. Deshigavinayagam Pillai and Shuddhananda Bharati Dasan are some other well-known poets of Tamil. But K. S. Venkatarmani, who is a poetic writer, essayist, novelist and poet, is called the Tagore of South India. Journalism is much advanced in Tamil and many journals, newspapers and periodicals have made Tamil rich. They have attained a rich standard of journalism. *Kalki* and *Ananda Vikatan*, popular Tamil weeklies, combine a wide appeal with a high level of

writings. Recently large number of books for children are written in Tamil. Monumental works on sciences have also been written.

Telugu. Telugu is spoken on the eastern coast of South India and its interior. Closing years of the eighteenth century witnessed deep impress of the western literature and the recent urge of new India on the growth of Telugu. In 1824 an English man named C. P. Brown has done a monumental work by editing and publishing ancient Telugu works. The end of the nineteenth century is marked by the renaissance in the Telugu poetry and the advent of Viresalingam and Laxmi Narsimhan and Vasurya Kavi. Viresalingam is the greatest prose-writer of Telugu. He had written novels, histories, poems, dramas, short stories, biographies, etc. In fact, no branch of literature escaped the talent of this versatile and dynamic literary figure. He introduced new literary trends and freed Telugu literature from orthodox classicism. In the field of drama Venkata P. Kavulu, Appa Rao and Laxminarsimhan deserve special mention. Social and historical dramas were successfully attempted. Gidugu who standardised modern Telugu, Tallavajjhula Sivasankar Shastri, Chinta, Rajamannar and R. V. M. G. Ramarau Bahadur are other prominent writers. Among the leading poets are Vishwanath Satya Narain, Shri Rang, Shri Niwas Rao, Tummala Seetharama Moorty Chaudhary and Shri Shri.

Sanskrit. In the modern age successful attempts have been made to modernise Sanskrit and adjust it to suit the needs of the time. With the growth of intense patriotism and religious awakening and social regeneration the study of Sanskrit was revived. Many non-official bodies like the Arya Samaj and Deccan Education Society started the teaching of Sanskrit in their educational institutions, Gurukuls and Pathshalas. Gradually the Government also encouraged its study in schools and colleges. A large number of Sanskrit academies and research institutes have been set up to carry on research in Sanskrit literature, edit ancient texts and publish them. Among such famous institutions are the Bhandarkar Institute of Poona, the Vedic Samsodhana Mandal of Poona, the Rajasthan Puratatva

Mandir, the Swadhyaya Mandal of Pardi, K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute of Bihar, the Deccan Post-Graduates Research Institute, the International Academy of Indian Culture at Nagpur and the Visheshwaranand Vedic Research Institute of Hoshiarpur. The Bhandarkar Research Institute has published and edited 130 Sanskrit works. *Rigved* with Sayan's *Bhashya* and a fresh *Bhashya* of *Rigveda*, the *Arseya Samhita*, *Vyakaran Mahabhashya*, *Mimansa Sutras* and other ancient Sanskrit texts have been published by the Research institutions. Dr. Ramkrishna Gopal Bhandarkar, Kashinath Trimbak Telang, V. S. Abhyankar, Dr. V. Raghvan, Anantkrishna Shastri and Narayan Shastri have been the most celebrated personalities of the modern Sanskrit literature. Original poetry, dramas and short stories have been written in Sanskrit. Sanskrit journals, a popular Sanskrit weekly *Bhavitavya* of Nagpur, Sanskrit Sahitya Parishad Patrika of Calcutta and Sanskrit Sanjivanam of Bihar have been reviving and promoting the study of Sanskrit in India.

Indo-Anglian Literature. Though control over English for purposes of self-expression at the highest literary level is very difficult to achieve,yet some Indians have scored certain remarkable triumphs in their expression and use of English language. Some have used English with clarity and precision like Gandhiji and S. Radhakrishnan, others have acquired a manner of writing rhythms of which are indistinguishable from those of an Englishman's English like G. K. Chettur and V. S. Srinivas Shastri, and a few others like Nehru gained mastery in form and content ; and for their expressiveness or animation or range of subject-matter they challenge comparison with the best works of Englishmen.

In the field of poetry there was initiative leaning towards the English themes, but gradually poems were composed about Indian scenes, gardens, mountains, birds, workers, temples, etc. Toru Dutt was the first Indo-Anglian poetess. She was followed by Michael Madhusudan Dutt. But the most celebrated Indo-Anglian poets were Rabindranath Tagore, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, K. S. Venkataramani, G. K. Chettur, Seshadri, Joseph Furtado of Goa and Aurobindo. Mrs. Naidu's success marked

a turning point in the history of Indo-Anglian poetry. She introduced Indian thought and life in the Indo-Anglian poetry. Tagore had enriched the English literature by his inimitable prose-poems, while the philosophical Indo-Anglian poetry of Aurobindo Ghosh and J. Krishnamurti describes the quest of Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

There is a large measure of achievement in the realm of fiction and short story. R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, K. S. Venkataramani and Bhabani Bhattacharya are leading and interesting novelists. They have depicted contemporary reality. Anand is concerned with the problems of the downtrodden classes as in his *Coolie* and the *Untouchable*, while Bhattacharya portrays a vivid picture of wartime reactions in Bengal. A large number of short stories by Tagore, Mulkraj Anand, Bhattacharya, R. K. Narayan and K. A. Abbas have been appearing in the popular British periodicals. In the field of essay and drama the Indo-Anglian output is scanty. S. V. V. of the *Hindu* and R. Bangaruswami and A. T. Macnaughton Thomas have achieved outstanding success as essayists. Rabindranath Tagore and Harindranath Chattopadhyaya are propagandist. In the art of literary criticism C. Narayan Menon, author of *Shakespeare*, Dr. Itrat and Dr. K. R. Srinivas have made valuable contribution to English literature. We have Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, P. A. Wadia and K. R. S. Ayenger as successful writers of autobiography. For philosophy and religion Swami Vivekanand, Shri Aurobindo and S. Radhakrishnan have achieved international fame. Shri Jadunath Sarkar, Dr. R. C. Majumdar, Dr. Sen, Dr. K. M. Panikkar and Dr. Iswariprasad have become famous as historians of Indo-Anglian literature.

Other Indian Languages. Other Indian languages like Kannada, Punjabi, Sindhi, Oriya, Malayalam, Assamese, etc., have made remarkable progress recently. Original works of high literary merit have been written. The year 1920 gave a definite turn to Kannada literature towards modernisation. Drama forms a significant episode in its rise. The chief modern tendency in Sindhi is to give up romanticism and to deal in realistic and masterly way with the social, economic and domestic problems

of today. The Oriya literature received orientation at the hands of famous poets Radhyanath Roy and Madhusudan Rao and Fakir Mohan Senapati who is regarded as the father of the modern Oriya prose. The modern Assamese literature begins with the publication of a journal *Jonaki* in 1899. Its editors Laxminath Barua, Chandrakumar and Hemchandra Goswami set the temper of the literature. In short, every Indian literature has made remarkable progress in prose, poetry, drama, short-story, novel, essay, biography, literary criticism, journalism, etc. In each of these there is not only a revival of ancient literary tradition of India but a happy blending of noble literary trends of the East as well as the West. Today Indian literatures are trying to adjust themselves rapidly with the changing spirit of the modern time.[1]

Fine Arts[2]

Indian fine arts had their own characteristics in the ancient and medieval age. After the decline of the Mughals the British had established firmly in India. In the early period of the British supremacy Indian fine arts were in the state of decadence. As the eighteenth century was a period of transition, these arts had suffered a good deal. The traditional continuity had disappeared. The creative power and the faculty of appreciating real art had disappeared. The excellent standard of art was lost. The following were its causes :—

Causes of the delcine of fine arts. 1. When the British power had replaced the Mughals the new sovereigns paid no heed to the development of fine arts and artists. Absence of royal patronage and the British policy of indifference arrested the growth of fine arts.

2. Some of the artists received shelter and patronage in the courts of the Indian princes and feudal lords, many of whom,

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1 For details about the literary development see *Literary History of India* by R. W. Frazer; *Indian Year Book 1952-53*; *Modern Vernacular Literature of Hindustan* by Grierson.

2 Refer to *Indian Art Through the Ages* (The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India); *Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. III, section IV; *Indian Architecture*, Vol II. by Percy Brown; *Indian Painting* by Percy Brown; *Art and Tradition* by A.K. Haldar.

in due course, had to go to the western countries under the influence of their new British sovereign power. Consequently they developed a taste for appreciating western art. Their interest in the cultivation of foreign arts increased.

3. With the western contact Indian masses began to like cheap western art.

4. The study of fine arts was not encouraged in the schools and colleges.

5. Due to the dislocation in the economic balance of the country and the tremendous increase in the output of cheap machine-made goods, the demand for artistic things declined considerably. Consequently artists were compelled to abandon their hereditary profession and seek other ones.

6. In the Government and non-government exhibitions the foreign arts and their products were displayed with preference to Indian arts.

7. In the first half of the nineteenth century the taste of the descendants of the old expert artists, painters and master craftsmen had degenerated a great deal. Their talents yielded to the western style and form. Consequently they began to imitate the western arts and follow their form and content.

8. Many western officials and Indians at this time had no capacity to understand and appreciate the real meaning of the Indian arts. Therefore they made no attempts to encourage the growth of arts.

9. Several Indians became ignorant of the symbols and traditions of Indian fine arts.

Thus, various causes led to the steady decline of Indian fine arts. But in the meantime the reawakened spirit of the nation permeated all spheres of life and the attention of Indians was drawn towards their fine arts. Interest in Indian arts was also created in foreign countries. The arousing of the national consciousness with regard to the ancient and medieval arts of India was largely the work of Fergusson, Havell, the principal of School of Arts, Calcutta, principal Percy Brown, 'Hindu Stuart', Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, Sister Nivedita, Abnindranath Tagore, etc. Ananda Coomaraswamy was the son of Sir Muthukumaraswami of Ceylon. He was sent to England for education very early in

life and secured a Doctorate of Science in London University. After his return to Ceylon he was appointed as Director of the Mineralogical Survey of Ceylon. But he devoted his life to the study and elucidation of Indian art in its various aspects. As he combined in himself a deep knowledge of Buddhistic philosophical and artistic masterpieces and those of the Aryan and Dravidian intellect and spirit, he started a movement for national education in Ceylon. Later on he lectured in American and European centres on Indian Singhalese art and after deep study of the methods and techniques of Indian arts produced excellent works on Indian arts to illustrate the treasures of India and Ceylon. He specialised in the exposition of Hindu painting, art of dance and sculpture. He stayed in America for nearly thirty years as the Curator of the Indian Section of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. There he popularised the movement for the Indian culture. His masterly and revealing exposition of Indian art and culture has opened America and the world to the intrinsic significance of India's creative genius and achievements. 'Interpretation to the European and American world of the essential and inseparable symbolism of Indian painting and sculpture and explanation of the inner spirit and rationalism of Indian art were the main contributions of Dr. Coomaraswamy.' He had much to preach the majesty and glory of Indian art. Principal E.B. Havell had completely grasped the ingredients of Indian fine arts and explained to the Indians the spirit and significance of Indian arts by his writings and works. He spread in the world at large a truer appreciation of India's cultural heritage. He laid emphasis upon the reawakening in painting. Similarly P. C. Brown, Head of the Calcutta School of Arts, explained the main principles of Indian architecture and wrote his monumental works on it. Abnindranath Tagore, born in 1871 in a talented family which had distinguished itself in other fields of learning, was trained in art by European artists. But he received inspiration from ancient Indian painting and entered the field of art. When he came in contact with Havell, his genius was inspired by him. Gradually Abnindranath was able to gather round himself a small schcol of young painters. The paintings and writings of this group ushered in a new begin-

ning during the first decade of the twentieth century which furnished the theory and practice of the Bengal Renaissance. The following pages will throw light on the Indian fine arts in the modern period.

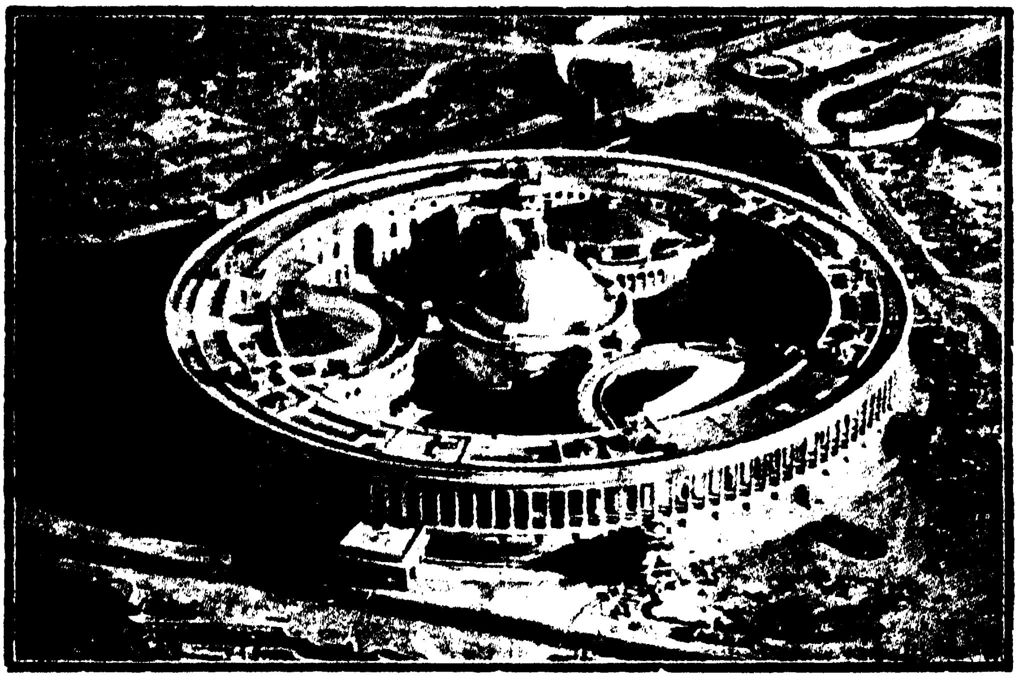
Architecture. The ancient and medieval architecture had its own characteristics. The magnificent structures of the Mughal period are considered to be the wonders of the world. But during the British rule the splendid art of architecture declined steadily. With the advent of Europeans in India structures based on the western model were constructed and the Portuguese erected a few churches and palaces on the Gothic style. In the beginning the English also constructed buildings modelled on the 'colonial style'. They were noted for their simplicity. At some places they built Indian structures. The tombs of the English erected in the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth were Muslim in design. When the British had laid out provincial capitals (Bombay, Madras and Calcutta) they followed the technique and design of the structures built in England. They combined Gothic, Roman and Victorian architecture in these Indian buildings. The Indian kings, nawabs, aristocrats and well-to-do persons took them as model structures and imitated them. Gradually the western architecture became popular and it spread all over the country. After the establishment of the Public Works Department during the British rule western architecture received a great deal of encouragement. This Department never recognised the existence and continuity of Indian architecture. The Government officials and engineers also paid no special attention to the traditions of architecture of India. As a result of this architecture became to the least progressive in India. No civic architecture in the Indo-British period has the solidity of a medieval palace or a *chatri* and the religious architecture was openly imitative and of the worst models.

In the beginning of the twentieth century there were two schools of Indian architecture—(1) The revivalist group the followers of which aimed at the revival of the indigenous architecture. They favoured the construction of such Hindu and Muslim buildings as were found chiefly in Rajasthan and

other Indian states. (2) The progressive and modern school the advocates of which were inclined to construct structures based on the western models. The second school flourished well. Consequently the Victoria Memorial Hall at Calcutta was constructed during the governor-generalship of Lord Curzon. When the new capital of India was laid out at Delhi, the architectural work was entrusted to the English engineers. Hence the structures of New Delhi lack Indian elements. James H. Cousins rightly observes that originality and imagination were not expressed in these buildings. They look like prisons. They betray traces of Italian design. By introducing latice work, dome or cornice in them, Indianisation of architecture was attempted. Today cheap buildings based on reinforced-cement-concrete-work are constructed easily and rapidly. They have simplicity but lack the beauties of Indian architecture. It resulted in the disappearance of ancient indigenous architecture.

Inspite of the expansion of the western architecture many Indian princes, nawabs and aristocrats constructed a few structures of Indian design. There is free play of imagination and charms in indigenous architecture. The modern magnificent buildings at Udaipur, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Mysore and other places are the best specimens of Indian master builders. The bathing *ghats* of Haridwar, Banaras and Maheswar, the temples at Mathura, the Jain temple of glass at Indore and the Birla temple at Delhi are noted for their uniqueness, strength and art. They are the brilliant examples of modern Indian architect. But there is bourgeois fantasy in city architecture and long flats in industrial towns and cities are modern phenomenon of Indian architecture.

Painting. While describing painting in the fourteenth chapter enough light has been thrown on the Mughal, Rajasthan and Kangra schools of painting. In the field of Mughal painting great emphasis was laid on miniature portrait, court scenes, trees, flowers, leaves, animals, beasts etc. In Delhi and Lucknow a number of descendants of the Mughal painters carried on their profession in the eighteenth century. But their productions were largely degenerate copies of the old art. The Rajasthan or Rajput painting also at this time was declining. After the fall



Parliament House, New Delhi.

of the Mughals the artists of the Rajput painting retreated in the Punjab Hill States. There they executed painting of good character in the nineteenth century. They gave birth to Pahari or Kangra School of Painting. The themes of the Kangra artists were varied. They had not only depicted mythological legends but scenes of daily life also. Their paintings reveal lyricism and sentiments of love and devotion mingled with an exuberant joy of life. Besides this, by expressing each *raga* or *ragini* in painting (called Ragmalas) Kangra artists have displayed unique association of music with painting. The Kangra School of Painting flourished luxuriantly in the court of Sansarchandra and the States of Tehri-Garwal and Bundelkhand. Among the painters of Garwal Bholaram, Manaku and Chaitu had gained great popularity. The miniatures of the Kangra painting exhibited such charm, beauty and workmanship that in the nineteenth century they were in great demand in many cities. In the Punjab the court of Ranjitsingh at Lahore was adorned by Kangra painters, among whom Kapursingh was famous. He painted a large number of figure subjects. The productions of many Sikh painters found favour in the closing years of the nineteenth century. But after the complete collapse of the Sikh power and the subsequent establishment of the British in the Punjab these painters were deprived of royal patronage. The earthquake of 1905 brought physical ruin to Kangra and its people including the painters. It gave a great setback to the art of painting.

In the nineteenth century the Rajput School of Painting was existing in its decayed form in Udaipur, Jaipur and Nathdwara in Rajasthan. Similarly a few families of the hereditary Mughal artists were surviving in Patna, Lucknow and Delhi. Though they retained the Mughal technique, their productions were devoid of life. Many European merchants and Anglo-Indians encouraged them to produce their miniature portraits in a semi-European manner. This led to the impress of western painting on these artists. The painters of Patna were so profoundly influenced by the European art of painting that they gave birth to Patna School of Painting which was hard and unfeeling.

In the South India traditions of art continued and painting

progressed well. In the eighteenth century Hyderabad became the centre of Muslim artists and Tanjore and Mysore of Hindu artists. But the productions of the Muslim painters of Hyderabad, Aurangabad and Daulatabad in the eighteenth century were small compared to those of the Northern India and they lacked in breadth of treatment and borrowed subject-matter from the Muslim courts in the Deccan. Further, in South there flourished two separate schools of painting–Tanjore and Mysore. In the later half of the eighteenth century many artists of Northern India had migrated to the court of Raja Saraphoji of Tanjore. They belonged to the Rajput School. In the first half of the nineteenth century during the reign of Shivaji (1833-55), the last Tanjore ruler, eighteen families of artists were patronised by the royal court. They were doing excellent painting in ivory and wood and were painting a number of large portraits in oil. After the death of Shivaji and Tanjore's annexation by the British, the royal patronage was discontinued and the Tanjore School dispersed. The Mysore School of Painting flourished well during the reign of Raja Krishnaraja Wodeyar of Mysore in the first half of the nineteenth century. They executed much portraiture on ivory. But after Krishnaraja the Mysore School became extinct. (*Indian Painting* by Percy Brown, Chapter VI)

When the British Government devoted its attention towards the education of the Indians in the later half of the nineteenth century, Schools of Arts were established at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. They began to impart instruction in drawing, modelling and painting and certain arts and crafts in accordance with Western academic tradition. There were ornamental drawing, wood engraving, lithography and photography. Therefore the talents of the Indian artists were influenced by the Western art. Ravi Varma, a Kerala painter, attempted to express Hindu religious concepts and mythological scenes in painting based on western style and technique. His productions, therefore, lacked originality. The advent of the twentieth century witnessed revival and reawakening in the domain of painting as a result of the Indian Renaissance. Havell and Abnindranath Tagore played prominent role in bringing about this revival.

Deriving their inspiration from the Ajanta and medieval paintings they made successful attempts to resuscitate Indian painting and rescue it from the degradation into which it had drifted. In 1903-4 Abnindranath gave birth to a new school of painting called the Bengal School of Painting. Though it had a happy assimilation of the Occidental and Oriental arts, yet it remained entirely Indian. Some art critics have named it 'Bengal Renaissance'. It received inspiration from the gracious figures of Ajanta and revived interest in Rajput and Pahari productions. Scenes from Indian legends and classical literature, episodes of Indian history and writings of celebrated Indian poets and authors provided themes for it. In technique, European methods of oil painting were given up and *water art* and *wash technique* were adopted. Consequently there had been wide expression of individual genius and happy mingling of distinct originality and sentimentality. Besides Abnindranath there were other talented artists of the Bengal School, namely Surendranath Gupta, K. M. Majumdar and Jaimini Roy. They were the disciples of Abnindranath Tagore. Nandlal Bose is noted for the vigorous expression of his lines ; 'Asit Kumar Haldar has adequately recreated visual equivalents for the sensuous imagery of a kindred spirit.' Under the headship of Asit Kumar Haldar Lucknow School of Arts flourished as a great inspiring centre. Here Iswardas gained great popularity.

Revival in the realm of painting in Bengal led to reawakening in the art in Gujrat. Consequently Ravishankar Rawal inspired the people to establish an art centre at Ahmedabad, whose product is Kanu Desai. His varied style had profoundly influenced the interest in 'film' and 'print'. Besides this, the academic or naturalistic styles of the west have produced several artists in India among whom Haldankar, Lalkaka, V. R. Rao and Malee of Bombay and J. P. Ganguli and Atul Bose of Calcutta deserve mention. Among modern artists of fame are Devi Prasad Roy, Choudhary, Rahman Chaghtai, Sarda Charan Vakil, Pramod Kumar Chatterjee and K. Venkatappa.

Before the second world war the trends of cosmopolitanism, radicalism and modernism had crept in the realm of painting.

Gajendranath Tagore, Jaimini Roy and Amrit Sher-Gil have been the great pioneers of these trends. Sher-Gil was born of a Punjabi father and an alien mother. After receiving training for her art in London and Paris she was inclined to Indian art. Her painting had mass and volume and plasticity and simplicity of the Ajanta frescoes. She pleaded for a return to Ajanta. She was the first representative of a great modern Indian art of international reputation. She was very original in the use of colour, using pure blacks and pure whites. "The greatest service she has done to modernism in Indian art is the proof she gave through her own work that secularisation of theme and departure from hierarchic tradition did not imply a less intense dedication." Her prematured death in 1941 gave a great setback to the art of painting.

Modern painters attempt to express various aspects of life. But their methods, instead of being representative of times, are imaginative. Their productions cannot be called popular as they are beyond the comprehensive power of an average man. Though they have been profoundly impressed by the modern European trends yet some of them have developed entirely an Indian style. Their paintings have been popular in India and abroad. Bombay has grown into a centre of new artists among whom Bendare, Hebbar, Chavda, Raza, Newton-Souza and Palsikar are prominent. Similarly in Calcutta Rathin Moitra, Gopal Ghosh and Paritosh Sen and in Delhi Krishnalal, Mago and B. Sanyal are prominent artists.

Besides the Government schools of arts in Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and Lucknow, many such new schools have been established and they are flourishing at Jaipur, Indore, Delhi, Banaras, Shantiniketan, Mysore, Patna etc. To encourage art many art societies have been set up, the leading among them are the Indian Academy of Fine Arts Calcutta, the Society of South Indian Painters Madras and the Progressive Artists Association Kashmir. Some art journals are started ; for example, '*Rupam*' under the editorship of O. C. Ganguli with the Government grant of Rs. 10,000/- was the best art journal in Asia. Its inspiring genius were Coomaraswamy and the two Tagores ; *Marg* is the most famous art journal today. Art

exhibitions, art conferences and art galleries have been organised to encourage art activities and popularise art.

Music.[1] In the eighteenth century music and dancing were neglected. However, Mohammed Shah was the last Mughal Emperor who liberally patronised music in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. Talented musicians flourished in his court, leading among them were Adarang and Sadarang. They were noted for their *Vina*-playing. It was at this time that Shori introduced *tappa* in Indian music. During the reign of Mohammed Shah melodious tunes were created on account of the synthesis of Hindu and Persian music techniques. But most of them were *shringaric* or having the sentiment of love expressed itself in the erotic motifs of heroes and heroines. After the fall of the Mughal Empire there was a steady decline in the music traditions of the country. A few celebrated musicians sought shelter in the courts of native rulers. Gradually music was degraded for sensual gratification. Therefore, people nursed a hatred against music and dancing. When the British established their supremacy here, they failed to understand Indian dances and music—vocal as well as instrumental and hence they were indifferent to it. But a few Englishman, admirers of Indian culture, grasped the salient features of Indian music and dancing. In the meanwhile some Indians keenly interested in music endeavoured to revive it. Maharaja Pratap Singh Deva (1779-1804) of Jaipur held a conference of musicians resulting in the composition of a monumental work on music '*Sangit Sagar*'. Mohammed Raza Khan, a noble man of Patna, wrote *Nagmat-e-Asaphi* on music in 1813. He tried to establish simplicity and uniformity of *ragas* and *raginis*. In 1842 Krishnanand Vyas published in Calcutta a standard work called *Sangit Kalpadrum* which had a good collection of Indian songs. Raja Sir S. M. Tagore also had written works on music like *Sangit Sar* and *Kanthakaumudi*. This encouraged some Europeans to

1. For music refer to *V.N. Bhatkhandeji's Works* (Hindi); *Music of Hindustan* by F. Strongways ; *Music of India* by Popley ; *Ragas and Raginis* by O. C. Ganguli ; *Introduction to the Study of Indian Music* by Clements.

study Indian music and compose works on it ; Williard, Wilson and Clements are noted for it.

Music continued to flourish in the South in the eighteenth century. Musicians were highly respected in the court of Raja Tuljaji (1763-1787) of Tanjore. As he himself was a well-versed musician he patronised musicians liberally. He had written a famous standard book on music, *Sangit Saramrit.* Another well-known book on music, *Ragtatva Navbodh* was composed by Srinivas. The celebrated musician of South India Tyagraj (1800-1850) belonged to Tanjore. His *bhajans* (devotional songs) have been very popular in the Southern India. The rulers of Kochin and Travancore in the far South patronised music. The most distinguished among them was Perumal whose songs are even today recited in Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Marathi.

On account of the Indian Renaissance and the growth of national consciousness in the nineteenth century our attention was focussed on the cultural heritage of our country and many determined to study and know it thoroughly. In the meanwhile there appeared several dramas in Indian vernacular literatures. This furthered the cause of Indian music and dance. Bengal took the lead in this direction. Raja Surendra Mohan Tagore had written many useful books on music including one on the history of Indian music. Maharaja Jatindra Mohan Tagore and Rabindranath's brother Jyotindranath Tagore had rendered valuable services to the cause of the revivalist movement in the field of music. In the celebration of religious rites music was adopted enthusiastically. In Brahmo Samaj under the leadership of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Maharsi Devendra Nath Tagore music was performed on the occasion of simple religious ceremonies. Rabindranath Tagore had transformed the Bengali music much so radically that it came to be named 'Rabindra Music' which is 'fluid, plastic, free and heterodox with emphasis on background music or orchestration.'

Since the advent of the twentieth century great attention was paid to the cause of Indian music. Music associations called *Sangit Samaj* or *Sangit Mandal* were established at many places for the purpose. Among these *Sangit Samaj* of Calcutta,

Jnanottejak Mandal of Bombay and *Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal* of Lahore deserve mention. Gradually schools, societies and *Vidyapithas* were set up at Poona, Patna, Lucknow, Gwalior, Indore and other prominent towns to teach instrumental and vocal music and to organise cultural and music programmes. Credit goes to Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and Vishnu Digambar Palsikar for the revival in the field of music. Bhatkhande published a book on music *Lakshya Sangitam* in 1910. His works on music and his lectures provided strong stimulus for the study of music. He had done a great deal to record and classify accurately and critically all the *ragas* and explain exhaustively theory of Indian music. He introduced scientific methods of teaching music. In 1916 he organised the first All India Music Conference at Baroda under the chairmanship of the Maharaja of Baroda. Later on he arranged such conferences frequently and invited celebrated musicians there. It resulted in the definite classification and proper notation on the scientific scale of various ragas like *sarang, todi, wilkham* etc. Recently the musicians in Bengal have tried to adopt the science and techniques of western music, without abandoning the basic principles of Indian music. This led to happy and harmonious synthesis in instrumental and vocal music. Today with the progress of modern education taste of the people for music became refined and interest in music increased. Music now figures in the High School and College courses. The educated middle class is patronising it. Now we have a galaxy of musicians who are noted for their individualism, lyricism and craftsmanship. The radio, the film industry, group music like Kirtans, revival of drama, music associations, academies and conferences have been popularising music.

Dancing. Together with music, dance was also encouraged. Attempts are being made to revive Indian dances and introduce changes in them in accordance with the western technique and a good deal of success is achieved in this field. The traditions of Kathakali, Manipuri and Bharatnatyam are being revived. Bharatnatyam is the dance of the South and Shrimati Rukmani Devi, Menaka, Gopi Nath, Radha, Shri Ram and Ram Gopal have popularised it. Kathakali is a difficult dance and

generally men perform it. But the *Lasiya* and the *Mohani Kathakali* dances are so charming and impressive that even women can perform them. Madame Simaki has earned good reputation for her excellent performance of the Kathakali dance. She had been the spirit of the Kathakali and by her performances of this dance in Europe and America she had spread its traditions abroad. In Lucknow Kathakali was revived by Kalka and Binda and they were followed by Achhan and Shambhu Maharaj. Manipuri dance which is noted for its intricate rhythmical variety and elaborate rules was revived by Rajkumar Priya Gopal. But the most leading exponent of Indian dances is Uday Shanker. He has performed various Indian dances in Europe and America. There the art critics 'showered on him rapturous praises not only for his mastery of the art but also for his marvellous blending of modern ideas with the traditions and technique built up by his country for centuries.' His skill for dancing is best exhibited in his *Shiva-Nritya* and *Kalia-Nritya* which symbolise unity of man with God. Recently a new dance called the 'Shantiniketan dance' has arisen in prominence. It is Tagore's dramas with and without words that hold the dance. Shantiniketan's contribution to song dances is permanent. The music is woven into the texture of the dance-pattern.

India is full of folk-dances and folk-lore. They are also revived together with the classical dances. The popular and well-known folk-dances are *Bhil-Nritya*, *Santhal-Nritya*, *Naga-Nritya*, *Gajar* (Bengal), *Kajri* (U. P. and Bihar) and *Ahir Nritya* (U. P.). Martial dances with sticks, swords and strings are also popular through-out India. The features of these folk and martial dances are group formation, vigorous movements, circular, forward and backward and lively music with simple beats. All primitive tribes are dance-mad.

A large number of books are being published on folk-dances, folk-lore and other dances of India. New institutions for the scientific study and practice of Indian dances have sprung up at various places. Earnest efforts are being made to revive indigenous types of dances in various institutions and dance-centres like the Prachin Kumari Nritya Sangha of Assam,

Vishvabharati (Shantiniketan), Purva Parishad (Calcutta), the Kerala Mandalam, Bharatiya Vidhya Bhawan (Bombay), Kala Kshetra (Adyar, Madras), Bharatiya Nritya-Kala Kendra (Patna) etc. Today appeal for revival is confined to middle classes and Indian dancing is still dependent for its growth and execution upon individuals.

Together with the revival of music and dance, theatre and art of drama have undergone considerable changes. In the beginning of the British rule the art of drama was confined to the wandering companies called *Ras Mandalis.* Gradually they yielded to theatre. For a long time theatrical companies established by the Parsis held the field and they imitated western dramas. With the progress of revivalist movement radical changes were introduced in the dramatic art of these companies. Today modern cinema has taken the place of theatre and the films have hit hard our drama. But there are theatres and clubs of amateur dramatists in big towns for philanthropic purposes as well as promoting the art of drama. They are adopting western techniques of drama and stage. However, we lack a national theatre.

For the last few years the film industry has been maintaining the art of music and dance by providing jobs to artists. As the film directors and organisers have no scientific knowledge of Indian music and dance, the film industry failed to encourage properly the traditions of music and dance of our country. Non-classical music and dances, modelled on the western techniques and based on undesirable songs and poems in the films could not raise Indian life to high level. It has poisoned the social life and lowered the tone of our morality. Fortunately many persons, Government and a few artists have become conscious of it and attempts are being made to rescue the art from the hands of film industry by Shantiniketan, Indian National Theatre of Bombay and others.

The Government of India have also been doing a good deal in this direction. The Central Government have established three Academies for the development of Arts and Culture. They are (1) Sahitya Akadami or the National Academy of Letters, (2) Sangit Natak Akadami or Academy of Music, Dance and

Drama, and (3) Lalit Kala Akadami or *Sahitya Akadami.* It was inaugurated on 12th March, 1954 and it is to function as an autonomous organisation. It is "a National Organisation to work actively for the development of Indian letters and to set high literary standards to foster and coordinate literary activities in all the Indian languages and to promote through them all the cultural unity of the country. The supreme authority of the Akadami vests in the General Council consisting of 67 members. There are nominees of the Central as well as State Governments in the General Council. The programme of the Akadami is to publish a national bibliography of contemporary works of literary merit in Indian languages, to sponsor publication of standard works on the history and development of modern Indian literatures, to translate Indian books of real merit and wide appeal in different languages, to enquire into the difficulties experienced by Indian writers, to give awards to outstanding books published in Indian languages, to publish a six monthly Bulletin giving an account of the Akadami's activities as well as works of literary merits in Indian languages, etc. It has selected 29 Indian classics for recommendation to UNESCO, published two volumes on Indian poetry, Russian-Hindi Dictionary, a small volume in English surveying the present position of literature in the major Indian languages, a volume on Buddhism, organised an exhibition of books published in Indian languages, has been giving awards of Rs. 5000/- each for the most outstanding book in each of the fourteen major languages published during three years, and is preparing an exhaustive bibliography of the works of Rabindranath Tagore for Tagore Centenary in 1961.

Sangit Natak Akadami. It was set up and inaugurated in 1953. It functions through a General Council, an Executive Board, a Finance Committee and other standing or ad-hoc committees which the General Council or Executive Board may appoint. The main objective of the Akadami is to foster and develop Indian dance, drama (including films) and music and to promote through them the cultural unity of the country. The main task of the Akadami for the present is to conduct survey and research in the existing art-forms found in various parts of

the country, to record and film them as part of our cultural heritage, to publish or to encourage publication of material about them, to develop and popularise these arts organising and sponsoring seminars and Festivals and by establishing institutions and to give awards to famous artists for music, folk and classical dance, drama and films.

To achieve its objective and execute its programme the Akadami has been organising National Music Festival. Since 1954 National Dance Festival of all the classical, traditional dance and modern ballets, has been giving financial assistance to various institutions and organisations of dance and music offering National Awards to eminent vocalists and instrumentalists of both North Indian and Karnatic Music as well as classical dancers every year. It has been awarding Running Trophy every year to the best troupe participating in the annual Folk Dance Festival held in Delhi on the Republic Day Celebrations. It is trying to build up a library of Indian music and has set up a committee to compile technical terms in Indian music, dance and drama. Efforts are being made to encourage, popularise and develop community singing in the country. The various States Governments have established Regional Academies to record and collect the folk music and dance of their respective areas.

As regards Drama the Akadami has requested the various State Governments to encourage different committees to set up their local cultural centres where artists can perform and people can participate in their own dramas, music, dance etc. The Akadami is trying to build up a National Theatre in Delhi, and is presenting National Awards to theatre workers every year and giving financial assistance to deserving organisations and institutions. The Akadami sponsored a National Drama Festival in 1954 and organised Film Seminar in 1955 and a Drama Seminar in 1956 and instituted film awards, awards for the best direction and screenplay. It has been organising programmes of dance and music for the various visiting cultural delegations of foreign countries.

Lalit Kala Akadami. This academy was also set up and inaugurated in 1954. It is a corporate body and works through

a General Council, an Executive Board, a Finance Committee and any other committee constituted either by the General Council or Executive Board. The main object of this Akadami is to encourage and promote study and research in the fields of painting, sculpture, architecture and applied arts. It is also to coordinate the activities of the regional or state academies, promote cooperation among art associations, encourage exchange of ideas between different schools of art, publish literature on art and foster national and international contacts through exhibitions, exchange of personnel and art objects. The main activities of the Akadami are to organise annual National Exhibition of Art, Exhibition of the Arts of other countries, sending cultural delegations abroad, organising Indian Art Exhibition in foreign countries, etc. The Akadami is surveying folk arts and crafts in the various regions of the country and establishing National Gallery of Modern Art at New Delhi. It has published a few important works such as Mughal Miniatures, Krishna legend in Pahari Painting, Mewar Paintings, a portfolio of contemporary paintings and a portfolio of Ajanta paintings.

Development of science. Though India achieved remarkable progress in the field of science in ancient times, it was discontinued in the medieval age and when the British established their *raj* here India lost her scientific knowledge. Frequent invasions and internal disturbanccs, absence of settled Government, lack of royal patronage, loss of political liberty, growth of the ideal of renunciation and asceticism, indifference to worldly progress and physical comforts which are achieved by the scientific inventions and discoveries, growth of the philosophy of fatalism, suppression of individual initiative and enterprise, rise of overcentralisation and feudal imperialism and absence of proper facilities and means for the study of sciences were the factors responsible for the discontinuation of the progress of various sciences in India. But the contact with the West and the Indian Renaissance made Indians experience that development of sciences and lure of inventions and discoveries were responsible for unprecedented progress and material prosperity of the West. Therefore they made up their mind to make efforts in this

direction. With the progress of education Government also devoted its attention to it. Astrology and Mathematics were already studied in the country. Now engineering and medicine on the western styles were started. Medical Colleges in Calcutta and Bombay and Engineering College at Roorkee were established. Though there was no provision for the study of various sciences and research work in colleges and universities till 1907, Sir Jagdish Chandra Bose made discoveries on plant-life in 1897 and startled the world by his demonstration in short wave wireless. This created self-confidence in Indians and made them feel that knowledge of science is not the monopoly of Europeans. Soon after this other scientists exhibited their talents. In 1902 Prafullachandra Roy wrote the history of Hindu Chemistry which acquainted the West with our progress in the field of Chemistry. In the same year provision was made for the study of science for degree classes and in 1908 for post-graduate classes in the Calcutta University. In 1914 a separate college for science was established in the same University. In 1911 the Indian Institute of Science was founded by Tata at Banglore for the research work in physics, chemistry etc. In 1914 Indian Science Congress was started to promote the study and research work in science, to acquaint people with the progress of science, to create interest in science and establish close contacts among the scientists. It has been doing admirable work in the field of science. As a result of this Indians made remarkable progress in various branches of science and gained international fame. In 1918 Srinivas Ramanujam startled the world by his talents for mathematics. Discoveries of Jagdish Chandra Bose in Botany, contributions of C.V. Raman to Physics in 1930 and orignal discoveries of Meghnad Saha in 1931 have gained international reputation for them. In recognition of his researches Raman received the Nobel Prize for Physics. He has established the Raman Institute of Science at Banglore to promote the study of Physics. To further the cause of science the National Academy of Sciences was founded at Allahabad in 1930. As a result of these institutions and research work science gained popularity and in colleges and universities it became a subject of higher study.

During the second world war a strong stimulus was provided to the scientific inventions to meet the needs of the war time. Twenty research institutions and associations were established in various universities for the cause of science and development of industries during the war time. They soon busied in research work. They have done satisfactory work in the field of colours, chemicals, plastic and other industries. In the meanwhile discoveries were made in Chemistry and Physics. International fame was achieved by Shri Krishnan, the disciple of Raman, for his discoveries in Physics in 1940, Shanti Swaroop Bhatnagar for his research in Chemistry in 1943, Bhabha and Chandra Shekhar for their valuable discoveries. They are appointed Fellows of world famous Royal Society. Other celebrated Indian scientists are R. N. Chopra, Director Drug Research Laboratory Kashmir, Mahalanobis, Statistical, Advisor to the Government of India and J. C. Ghosh, Director Technological Institute, Kharagpur.

After the political liberation the Government of India had started a separate department to encourage scientific inventions and constituted an advisory body for it. Gradually interest in the scientific inventions and discoveries increased and the people and the Government both moved in this direction rapidly. Consequently a large number of technical and scientific institutions were established. Among these the National Physical Laboratory at Delhi, National Chemical Laboratory at Poona, National Metallurgical Laboratory at Jamshedpur, Fuel Research Institute at Jharia Coalfields, Central Glass and Ceramic Research Institute, Institute of Radio-Physics and Electronics at Calcutta, Madras Institute of Technology and Central Drug Research Institute at Lucknow are well-known. Besides these, Geological Survey of India established in 1916 and Botanical Survey of India are doing praise-worthy work in their own fields. All these institutions have trained scientists and provided valuable material for the study of various branches of science.

After the achievement of our independence in 1947 the attention of the Government and the people is directed towards the revival of Indian culture and civilisation. The Central Government has prepared a scheme for the Central Cultural Trust and

a Central Institution is established at Delhi to further the cause of Indian culture. Europeans and Americans are over anxious to understand the Indian culture and civilisation. Great interest is aroused in them for the knowledge about India. Because they are groaning under modern materialism and crushed under the weight of vested interests of various 'isms' of today, the world peace is being endangered by the atom and hydrogen bombs of modern scientific culture of the West. Consequently western countries are looking towards India eagerly. India by her spiritual force can make them experience the eternal peace. But Indian culture being isolated from science became effete and moribund. It ceased to grow. It has to adopt western materialism and science and to maintain its individuality. It has to advance with Indian ideology in the realms of art, science, economics, politics, religion, etc.

Indian culture, which has been absorbing ingredients of Aryan, Dravidian, Persian, Greek, Chinese, Muslim and various other cultures from time immemorial, should be today so wide and assimilative that it may absorb the salient features of the western culture and civilisation. Today we need such a human culture which may not only unify the ancient and modern Indian culture but have happy synthesis of the East and the West. Indian culture can alone satisfy this need and India is the only country where the East and the West can contact happily and synthesise easily. India is to achieve, during the conflict of the two hemispheres, a new synthesis in which the cultural heritage of our ancient land will be reconciled and enriched.

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